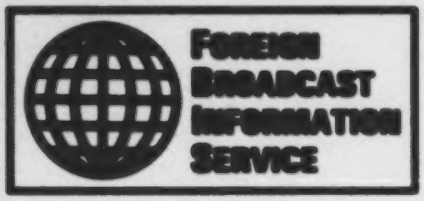

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Near East & South Asia

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Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Report Claims Israel 'Still Occupying' Elat

MM2401110796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 21 Jan 96 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Arab League: Israel Occupying Egyptian Territory"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, AL-HAYAH — In a new report on the Eritrean-Yemeni dispute over Hanish al-Kabir island, north of Bab el Mandeb in the Red Sea, the Arab League says that Israel is still occupying an Arab territory, namely the port of Umm al-Rashrash, southwest [as published] of Sinai (near Taba), now known as Elat, situated on the Gulf of Aqaba.

Israel occupied the Egyptian village in March 1949, a month after it signed the truce agreement with Egypt in Rhodes.

The report said that Eritrea's occupation of the Yemeni island of Hanish al-Kabir falls in the framework of "foreign ambitions" in the Red Sea, pointing out that since its establishment in May 1948 Israel has been interested in trying to "consolidate its presence in the Red Sea." [passage omitted]

Arab League Chief Condemns 'Sabotage' in Bahrain

NC2301150996 Cairo MENA in English 1446 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo Jan 23 (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid condemned acts of sabotage which recently took place in Bahrain and spread panic among citizens.

He also denounced foreign interference that sow sedition and aim at destablising the country.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed the Arab League's support of Bahrain in all measures adopted to confront these acts which are alien to the Arab communities, and conflict with Arab and Islamic values.

Islamic Affairs

Article Discusses 'Bosnian Arabs' Question

96LH0075A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 20 Dec 95 p 7

[Article by Mahmud 'Atallah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite all of the skepticism regarding the success of efforts to establish a lasting, comprehensive peace between the former Yugoslav republics, the political signs indicate that the current international intervention to stop the war is serious and completely determined to implement what has previously been difficult to implement.

The political element indicating this seriousness and determination is the new international military configuration, which U.S. land forces have joined, that has assumed responsibility for implementing the agreements signed by the warring parties, in which they commit themselves to a cease-fire and efforts to establish peace.

International pressure, especially U.S. pressure, is also being exerted on the warring parties to force them to keep their promises or face sanctions, which might even include armed action, because, this time, there is no alternative to peace in Bosnia, regardless of the cost of achieving it.

The fighting has actually stopped and quiet has returned to the Balkans after many years of killing and destruction. A lasting, comprehensive peace has yet to emerge, but the situation is beginning to favor the peoples of the region, especially the Bosnian people, who have experienced the greatest hardships and faced many human tragedies and catastrophes.

The end of a war is always the prelude to a new era, the dimensions of which will depend on the results of the war itself. A war ending in victory generates aspirations to obtain the fruits of that victory. A war ending in defeat begins a collapse that can only be stopped by a determination to rebuild.

Regarding the Bosnian people, including both the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia, the final outcome represents neither a gain nor a loss, because these people have lost enough. No further loss can surpass what these people have already lost. Likewise, no victory can erase the bitterness of the past or return what has been lost. The important thing is for the Bosnian people to begin the necessary rebuilding process, which one analyst described as a key source of employment for the combatants following the war's end.

The truth is that any period following a war, whether it ends in victory or defeat, is one of the most critical periods in any nation's history. The jobs available for soldiers returning from the battlefield will determine the future of this nation, which can either rejoin the march of progress or collapse completely under the weight of struggles to find jobs for the unemployed. Peace in Bosnia is not the end of the matter. Efforts to rebuild and employ those returning from the war must begin before an explosion occurs. However, all who fought will not be employed. Some of them came from abroad to help, and they are still hoping to reap the fruits of the help that they gave.

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To clarify the picture further, we should compare the Bosnian situation to the holy war in Afghanistan. Thousands of young Muslim men participated in that long war against the former Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan. The occupation did indeed end, and Afghanistan was liberated. But the fighting did not stop. A civil war erupted, and it continues to rage to this day. The reason is that the combatants returning from the battlefield did not find jobs waiting for them. They took up arms again to resume their vocation.

Another problem that emerged concerns the young volunteers from throughout the Islamic world who joined in the holy war to liberate Afghanistan.

Some of the volunteers, who have been nicknamed the "Afghan Arabs," have found work only in the field of guerrilla warfare at which they had come to excel. They continued shooting, either in Afghanistan or abroad, but mostly in their countries of origin, where they began to engage in acts of violence and sabotage in the hopes of toppling the government and seizing power.

Some of them have been arrested, tried for terrorism, and sentenced to prison terms or death.

Some of them have fled to join the network of fundamentalist, extremist organizations that are planning sabotage operations throughout different parts of the world for underground organizations that the world has so far been unable to pin down.

Perhaps the attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa reveals some of the dimensions of this problem. Investigations indicate that the those who carried out the training and execution of that attempt are among the "Afghan Egyptians" who had fought under the banner of the holy war in Afghanistan.

It is important to note that some of them sought to continue working as combatants in another region's holy war. Thousands of them joined the Muslims of Bosnia in a new Islamic holy battle, which appears to be ending following the signing of an historical agreement between the sides in the Yugoslav war.

However, just as the war is ending, a new battle, the battle of the combatants' search for jobs, is beginning. It is causing worry among NATO leaders, especially the leaders of U.S. forces. They fear that they will be exposed to problems caused by this battle. Several incidents have actually occurred, even though NATO and the United States have reportedly obtained a promise from Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to effect the departure of these non-Bosnian combatants, so that the peace forces can conduct their missions.

Hence, this problem must be solved before it gets out of control and explodes in a repetition of the "Afghan Arabs" problem, especially given that there are Western countries that are encouraging these former combatants to seek asylum in them. These countries believe that will be able to control these combatants' movements by granting them asylum, thereby containing the problem. But the truth is that granting them asylum will give the terrorist movement a free scope to act not only against the combatants' home governments but also against the countries hosting them.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 12 Jan

NC1901150096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 12 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Perry Reportedly Discusses Formation of Military Pact
2. Authorities Release 15 Israeli Detainees
3. Muslim Brotherhood Youths Apply To Form Political Party
4. Cairo University Calls For Assisting Iraqi People
5. Journalists Association Prepares New Press Law
6. Arabs Boycott Cairo Seminar To Protest Israeli Participation
7. Government Criticized for Exporting Gas to Israel
8. Labor Party Leader Praises al-Janzuri' Stance on Opposition
9. Al-Azhar Calls For Reconciliation Between State, Islamists
10. Writers React to Israeli Spy Case
11. Writers Say Government Measures Increase Violence
12. 'Adil Husayn Slams Government Policy on Arab Issues

PERRY REPORTEDLY DISCUSSES FORMATION OF MILITARY PACT

In a 400-report on pages 1 and 8, Mahmud Bakri says that during his latest visit to Israel, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry discussed a military alliance including the United States, Israel, Jordan, and Turkey to serve U.S. interests.

AUTHORITIES RELEASE 15 ISRAELI DETAINEES

A 300-word unattributed report on page 1 says the Egyptian authorities, on orders from the Egyptian lead-

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ership, released 15 Israeli detainees suspected of spying in Sinai.

MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD YOUTHS APPLY TO FORM POLITICAL PARTY

A 400-word report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah and Khalid Yunus on page 1 notes that the Political Parties Committee has received an application from Muslim Brotherhood youths to form a political party under the name of the Center.

CAIRO UNIVERSITY CALLS FOR ASSISTING IRAQI PEOPLE

A 100-word unattributed report on page 1 says Cairo University Teaching Staff Club members have appealed to all Arab and Islamic countries to take every step to enable the Iraqi people to defend their territorial integrity and ease their suffering. The club members expressed their deep appreciation of United Arab Emirates President Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan sending shipments of medicine and baby milk to the Iraqi people, who are suffering an ordeal resulting from Arab apathy and the injustice of the Iraqi rulers and enemies.

JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION PREPARES NEW PRESS LAW

A 250-word unattributed report on pages 1 and 8 notes that the followup committee in the Journalists Association announced that the new draft press law submitted by People's Assembly Deputy Ayman Anwar is the same as the one prepared by the Journalists Association. The report notes that the journalists continue to collect signatures in support of the new draft law.

ARABS BOYCOTT CAIRO SEMINAR TO PROTEST ISRAELI PARTICIPATION

A 200-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad on page 1 says that scientists and seismologists from 22 Arab countries boycotted the first international conference on earthquakes and natural disasters organized by Cairo University in protest at Israel's participation with an official delegation.

GOVERNMENT CRITICIZED FOR EXPORTING GAS TO ISRAEL

In a 320-word report on pages 1 and 8, Yusuf Sa'd says that at a seminar on desert construction on 10 January geologists and economists criticized the government's policy on exporting gas to Israel. They expressed their surprise at newspaper reports on this issue, particularly because Egypt does not have sufficient gas reserves. They say Egypt must preserve energy and not export gas or oil because it must cope with the needs of population growth.

LABOR PARTY LEADER PRAISES AL-JANZURI'S STANCE ON OPPOSITION

In a 600-word article, "I Welcome Dr. al-Janzuri's statement on consultation with the Opposition over New Laws," on pages 1 and 8, Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri says the statement by Prime Minister al-Janzuri after the first cabinet meeting is "positive and bridges a serious gap that always existed between the government and the opposition." Noting al-Janzuri's remarks that he will consult the opposition on every new law, he says: "This is a tradition that, if entrenched, will be tantamount to a new development in political life in Egypt." He says the government establishments held a strange view of the role of the opposition parties, considered every plan by the opposition as "mere opposition talk," and viewed the opposition as a regime decoration without any role in domestic or foreign policy. He says the prime minister's new tradition means "practical recognition" of the opposition's role, as is prevalent in all democratic countries. He says he hopes this new tradition will be followed by promoting relations between the government and opposition. He argues that opposition is not meant for opposition's sake; it opposes what is wrong and supports what is right. He says the opposition wants an agreement with the government on the main lines of Egypt's supreme interests in the Arab and Islamic world and adds that it is unreasonable for the current government to make plans for the 21st century.

AL-AZHAR CALLS FOR RECONCILIATION BETWEEN STATE, ISLAMISTS

'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad writes a 1,600-word report on page 2 entitled: "Reconciliation Between the Islamists and the State is the Most Important Task of the New Awqaf Minister; Al-Azhar Ulema Call for Reinstating Preachers Banned from Preaching." He says the al-Azhar ulema were pleased with the appointment of Dr. Mahmud Zaqzuq as the new Awqaf minister, particularly as the Ministry's performance in the past few years had waned and numerous disputes had arisen between al-Azhar ulema and the Ministry. These disputes emerged over violence between the Islamic groups and the regime and the government campaign against all the Islamic leaderships. The report notes that al-Azhar ulema pin great hopes on the new Awqaf minister to convince senior state officials to begin a comprehensive dialogue with the Islamic current.

The report notes that the head of the al-Azhar Ulema Front, Dr. Muhammad al-Birri, hopes the new Awqaf

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minister will begin contacts with senior officials to convince them to initiate a dialogue with those working for Islam and the Islamist youths. Al-Birri says that reconciliation between the Islamic current and the State will save time and funds to devote resources to construction instead of planting seeds of division and feuds. He calls on the new minister to choose new and sincere faces from the ulema as preachers, not the "suspects with whom the people are fed up" and who are described as "the ulema of the authorities."

Shaykh Mahmud 'Abd-al-Fattah says: "The most important duty" of the Awqaf minister is to begin reconciliation efforts between the Islamic current and the government so that "enmity, animosity, and feuding" among the Egyptian people may disappear. He calls on the minister "to free the major mosques from the grip of the government and the security agencies."

Dr. Yahya Isma'il says that the most important task facing the new minister is to reconcile the Islamic stream and the state, something he calls "an urgent and required necessity." He calls on the minister to make preachers accountable to scholarly ulema. He urges him not "to let security reports decide the preachers' future and status."

Islamic writer Dr. Muhamamd 'Amarah says that reconciliation between the Islamic stream and the government is "a political decision that neither the Awqaf minister nor the prime minister can make; it is a decision that only President Husni Mubarak can make."

WRITERS REACT TO ISRAELI SPY CASE

In a 1,700-word account on page 3, "The Harvest of Peace: A Handful of Spies," Mahmud Bakri notes the arrest of alleged Egyptian spy 'Amir Salman. He claims Israel recruited him to distribute drugs in Egypt and to gather information on Egypt's national security. He says that while the Egyptian rulers are singing the praises of the "enemy" and are busy preparing further steps to enhance peace, the Israeli intelligence, Mosad, recruited an Egyptian drug trafficker to smuggle drugs to Egypt and to gather military and strategic information on Egypt, particularly about the Egyptian Air Force, rockets and missiles, arms development programs, and military activities in Sinai.

In a related 1,000-word report on the same page, 'Amr Salman criticizes the advocates of normalization of ties with Israel. He says the issue of Salman exposes anew the Israelis' intentions and "flagrant enmity" for Egypt and all Arabs. He cites several figures who criticize peace and normalization with Israel and urge the Egyptian Government and the Arab countries to reconsider peace, normalization, the Middle East market, and cooperation with Israel. They suggest recalling the Egyptian ambassador to Israel and expelling the Israeli ambassador in Cairo.

WRITER SAYS GOVERNMENT MEASURES INCREASE VIOLENCE

A 3,000-word account on page 4 by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad and Mu'tazz al-Hadidi discusses the increasing wave of violence in Egypt in the past three years despite laws passed by the People's Assembly to stem this wave. They say the ultimate loser in the bloody confrontation between the government and the Islamic groups is Egypt, its economy, and stability. They maintain that the main reason for the escalation of violence is the "erroneous policy pursued by the government and the Interior Ministry," because they opt for physical liquidation instead of dialogue and law. They say that proof of what is called the Interior Ministry's obduracy and insistence on its policy lies in events that accompanied the recent elections. They argue that while the opposition parties sought a peaceful change, the government and the Interior Ministry blocked every avenue for change by rigging the elections. This situation created a favorable climate conducive to violence. A solution to this crisis, they argue, lies in "dissolving the People's Assembly" and holding new elections under full judicial supervision. The writers then give figures showing a sharp increase in acts of violence and fatalities between 1992 and 1995 despite the passing of the terrorism law, which was introduced in 1992, ostensibly to end the wave of violence. They say the acts of violence and the death toll increased manifold following the implementation of the terrorism law, especially as the government has taken new measures and passed new laws that aggravate the situation. The most notable of these laws are the repression of freedom, military trials, laws on nationalizing the professional associations, and muzzling of press freedom. They maintain that the government has avoided addressing the real reasons behind the violence and is persisting in its campaign of arrests and repression, causing popular wrath against the government.

'ADIL HUSAYN SLAMS GOVERNMENT POLICY ON ARAB ISSUES

In a 5,000-word article covering all of page 5 entitled "There Is No Way Out of the Blockade Impasse Unless a New Page Is Opened With Sudan," Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn views Egypt's policy on various issues. Discussing the new government, he says that Prime Minister al-Janzuri does not expect to remain in office past the year 2,000 because this is "impossible and inadmissible and the people reject the current policy." He says we do not need official

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statements or a trial period to decide that the new government is futile and will only lead to backwardness. He says the new prime minister's statements do not differ from his predecessor's. He questions al-Janzuri about his stance on press law 93, reversal of the policy on political plurality, election rigging, and whether he will continue to rule by emergency law. He accuses the prime minister of being a partner in the outgoing government that committed these crimes. He says that al-Janzuri is dutybound to discuss these issues and express his views on them. He then questions al-Janzuri's failure to discuss developments in the region and his stance on the U.S.-Zionist schemes in the region.

Turning to Egypt's foreign policy, Husayn says that Egypt's policy is "subservient." He maintains that if Egypt had independent decision-making, it would opt for having closest ties with the Arab and Islamic countries. He claims that Foreign Minister Musa's statement on Middle Eastern and Mediterranean relations show that these arrangements were made abroad and imposed on us. He argues that while the Middle Eastern arrangements give Israel and the United States hegemony over the region, the Mediterranean arrangements give the European countries a greater role. He says that both blocs ignore the region's Arab-Islamic identity and that these arrangements aim at "undermining Egypt" so that the region's other countries can be subjugated. He argues that Egypt must insist on its affiliation with the Arab bloc and strengthen its Islamic and African alliances.

Discussing the Arab League, Husayn says Egypt played a prominent and effective role among the Arabs within the framework of the Arab League. This league has become paralyzed and unable to address any problem, he says, and adds that it is doing nothing to prevent the current "capitulation process." He claims that Egypt's rulers are responsible for the Arab collapse and that Egypt's leadership is no longer capable of bringing the Arabs together.

Noting the recent Damascus Declaration countries meeting in Damascus, Husayn criticizes the statement they released because it recognizes the right of any Arab country to seek the help of foreign forces. This, he says, means recognition that the presence of U.S. forces in the Gulf is legal. He also notes that these countries carefully broached the issue of Israeli nuclear power, but they assailed Iraq over reports that it continues to produce biological weapons and Iran's programs to develop its nuclear potential. He notes that the statement attacks Iran and Sudan for encouraging terrorism and disturbances, saying that this is in line with current U.S. policy. He claims that the Damascus Declaration countries seek to make a success of the current talks to end the Arab-Israeli conflict. He says that choosing Damascus as a venue for the meeting was certainly aimed at supporting the Syrian leadership before beginning the latest round of talks with Israel.

Discussing the Eritrean occupation of the Yemeni islands, Husayn regards this as part of a siege on Egypt and terms it "humiliating." He says this Eritrean aggression does not affect Yemen alone but Arab security, particularly Egypt's interests and security. Stressing that with this action Eritrea ignores Egypt and the Arabs, he says that it is difficult to understand the aggression against the Yemeni islands without assuming that Eritrea "relies on U.S.- Israeli support." This, he says, explains why Egypt and the Arab countries remained calm about the aggression against the islands. He claims that the U.S.-Israeli plan seeks to control the region's waterways. He contends that the United States now supports the United Arab Emirates' claim on the three Gulf islands, which the Gulf countries offered to the shah of Iran in the 1970's to protect Gulf oil supplies. Now the United States, he says, considers that its sovereignty over oil and the vital waterways are lacking because Iran controls these islands.

Turning to Eritrea, he says that it is not only striking at Egypt's strategic interests but is also turning into a base against Sudan. He accuses Eritrea of being involved in a plan to separate south Sudan so that mini-states can be established and the Nile river sources can be controlled. He says that Eritrea is striking at Egypt in the Red Sea and at the Nile sources. In conclusion, he argues that there can be breaking the siege and confronting U.S.-Israeli hegemony unless Egypt reconsiders its policy and relations with Sudan.

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 16 Jan

NC2201130296

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 16 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Popular Conferences Organized to Bring Down People's Assembly
2. Recent Death Sentences Against Islamists Criticized
3. Al-Hudaybi Denies Link Between Brotherhood, New Party
4. Hamas's 'Ayyash Eulogized; Jerusalem's Arab identity Stressed
5. Media Slammed for Promoting Ties With Israel
6. Calls For Abolishing Islamic law of al-Hisbah Criticized

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POPULAR CONFERENCES ORGANIZED TO BRING DOWN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

Tariq 'Abd-al-Hamid writes on page 3 a 3,000-word report on a popular conference organized by the opposition parties in Tanta as part of efforts "to bring down the forged People's Assembly." Speakers at the conference reiterate claims that the government rigged the recent legislative elections and used all efforts to isolate the opposition. They call for concerted party and popular work to overthrow the new Assembly.

In his address to the gathering, Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri discusses economic and other problems facing Egypt as a result of government policies and stresses the role of the people in changing this situation. Noting that the new People's Assembly is dominated by members of the ruling National Democratic Party, Shukri says the new legislators are required to endorse plans for selling the public sector and facilitating Israel's integration into the Middle East. He points out government plans to export gas to Israel and says this is unacceptable to the Egyptian people, "who reject Zionist domination of our capabilities under pretexts of prosperity and wellbeing."

Wafd Party Deputy Leader Dr. Nu'man Jum'ah says the opposition parties, all victims of the "aggression of the forged regime," need to "coexist and demonstrate solidarity and brotherhood against those who usurped rights." He maintains that the recent polls exposed the government and awakened the people to its true nature as an "illegitimate" authority using "gangsters" to distance the opposition and threaten the social system.

Lashin Abu-Shanab, speaking for the Muslim Brotherhood, says the people did not reject the opposition during the legislative elections. People supported the opposition with all their strength, he says, "but the forces of corruption and tyranny forged the will of the nation." He says the mask fell off the government face during the elections, and the people realized "that they are living under a grave injustice." He asserts: "Evil will not continue for ever. The power and will of the Egyptian people and the opposition forces are capable of correcting the situation, God willing."

Other speakers from the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the National Progressive Unionist Grouping, the Nasirite Arab Democratic Party, and the communists also stress the illegitimacy of the new People's Assembly, accuse the government of violating the law and the Constitution, and agree that the opposition is targeted and therefore needs to coordinate its efforts.

Another 800-word report by Daud Hasan on the same page cites speakers at another similar conference organized by the Labor Party in another city. Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri and other party officials maintain that the government rigged the polls and conspired against the opposition. Shukri maintains that "the regime wanted to distance the Islamic opposition in particular, and the opposition in general." He says "the recent election farce in the country showed that the government was eager to choose corrupt people to lead Egypt into the 21st century."

RECENT DEATH SENTENCES AGAINST ISLAMISTS CRITICIZED

A 500-word report by Ahmad Mahjub on pages 1 and 8 cites men of law and human rights activists as criticizing the recent ruling by the Higher Military Court sentencing 6 Islamists to death and several others to prison terms. Counselor Yahya al-Rifa'i says trying civilians by military courts "is unconstitutional, and a form of terrorism practiced by the state against its civilian citizens." He notes that judges have always called for amending the martial law provisions so that the jurisdiction of military courts will be confined only to crimes of military discipline. He says all human right organizations denounce the referral of civilians to military courts.

Dr. Muhammad 'Usfur regrets the fact that the government has ignored every call for stopping trials of civilians by military courts. He urges all parties to take a unified position to confront the state of emergency in the country. Najad al-Bura'i, secretary general of the Egyptian Human Rights Organization, stresses that the military trials are "null and void" and their rulings are "illegitimate." He argues that defendants before military courts do not receive fair trials, and urges President Husni Mubarak to "stop these massacres falsely called trials."

—A 1,000-word report by Ahmad Mahjub on page 8 offers some humanitarian stories on the "suffering" of the families of some security prisoners. The reporter cites old and sick fathers and mothers of prisoners describing their agonies and hardship and appealing to the government to have mercy on them and release their beloved sons. Some of them say they do not know where their sons are detained, others say government charges against their sons were fabricated.

AL-HUDAYBI DENIES LINK BETWEEN BROTHERHOOD, NEW PARTY

A 270-word report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah on page 1 cites Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, Muslim Brotherhood spokesman and general guide, denying any link between the Muslim Brotherhood and the new al-Wasat Party, whose founders recently applied for a license.

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HAMAS'S 'AYYASH EULOGIZED; JERUSALEM'S ARAB IDENTITY STRESSED

In part of his 3,000-word article, columnist Mahjub 'Umar eulogizes Yahya 'Ayyash, the Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas bomb-maker who has recently been killed in Gaza. While expressing pain for 'Ayyash's death, the writer maintains that struggle will continue until Palestine is liberated "from the filth of the racist Zionists." Israel's assassination of 'Ayyash, he says, is not a sign of strength. "We do not fear this enemy. We know that it has formidable capabilities, and that the technology it used in the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash is just a tiny part of the technology it receives from the United States." The writer adds: "We know that we are facing this American and Israeli technology, but we have what they both cannot conquer: faith and patriotism."

In the other part of his article, 'Umar discusses Jerusalem urging Arabs and Muslims to prepare themselves for a tough battle to regain the holy city when negotiations over its future begin this summer. He reviews Israel's attempts to Judaize the city and calls on Arabs and Muslims to prepare studies and present political plans for establishing Jerusalem as "an Arab capital under Arab sovereignty".

—In a 600-word article on page 6, columnist Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah also discusses the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash in Gaza, noting that the circumstances of the killing have not been made public by the Palestinian Authority [PA]. Pointing out that the medical report on the death disappeared, he asks who has interest in hiding it. Noting that the Palestinian security agencies leaked a report claiming that Hamas is infiltrated by Israeli intelligence, the writer says this is an attempt to justify the PA's "failure or perhaps collusion with the Zionists, as Hamas said." He maintains that Palestinian security is penetrated by Israeli intelligence. "This is perhaps one of the reasons why Hamas is refusing to cooperate with the PA and its security services," he says.

MEDIA SLAMMED FOR PROMOTING TIES WITH ISRAEL

In a 1,500-word article on page 5, 'Abd-al-Mun'im Salim Jibarah laments the fact that official Arab media are working hard to promote and beautify talks and normalization with Israel while dismissing the opponents of this policy as terrorists and extremists that must be punished. He says Israel has not changed its methods and is still making threats against the Arabs, declaring Jerusalem as its capital, adopting a policy of "treachery and physical liquidation" as shown by the assassination of Yahya 'Ayyash, and sending spies to Egypt.

Jibarah says the media are doing the same thing regarding local issues by applauding rigged elections, "repeating false accusations that those preaching for God's cause are extremists and terrorists, and supporting all forms of freedom confiscation and human rights violation." This is a time when values are turned upside down, he says, a time when "the killer sons of Zion become peace advocates and kin, while sincere and honorable people become extremists, terrorists, and blood shedders that must be sent to prisons or gallows."

Jibarah calls for real peace between the rulers and the ruled, a peace that allows peoples to play their rightful role in confronting the real enemy. "The right way to this peace," he says, "is to unleash freedoms, adhere to rights and constant principles, mobilize resources, and unify forces around identity and genuine character."

CALLS FOR ABOLISHING ISLAMIC LAW OF AL-HISBAH CRITICIZED

In a 1,000-word article on page 5, Labor Party Deputy Leader Muhammad Hilmi Murad criticizes calls by Ibrahim Sa'dah, chief editor of the state-owned AKHBAR AL-YAWM, and others for a legislation banning ordinary citizens from suing writers or artists for works they deem as violation of the Islamic shari'ah. Under the Islamic law of al-Hisbah, which is valid in Egypt, any Muslim can take a legal action against another if he believes the actions of this other person harm Islam, and even if the plaintiff has no personal interest in the case. Recently, several lawsuits of this nature against authors and artists have been filed.

Murad wonders why Ibrahim Sa'dah is launching a "fierce" campaign against the lawyers who filed such lawsuits against people "who departed from firm religious principles established in the souls of the majority of Muslims." He notes that the Constitution states that Islam is the religion of the state, and that the Islamic shari'ah is the main source of legislation. He defends the lawyers as proceeding from concern about their religion, not from willingness to obtain personal fame, as Sa'dah charges. Murad says resorting to the courts is better than resorting to violence and terrorism.

—In a 600-word article on page 6, columnist Ahmad al-Suyufi also mocks Ibrahim Sa'dah for defending what the latter calls creativity and enlightenment. For Sa'dah, the writer sarcastically says, enlightenment means that a picture of a semi-naked woman appears on the cover of a magazine; it does not matter if this picture goes against public decency. The writer defends al-Hisbah law as "a form of national alertness, a way of confronting the mistakes of society and rulers." For Sa'dah and others, he contends, creativity means departing from the norm and slandering religion.

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Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 16 Jan

NC2101201696

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 16 January edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Arabic Promoted as Language of Scientific Instruction
2. Writer Says No Church and State Separation in Islam
3. Apostasy, Separation Case Against Writer Reviewed
4. Koran Linked to Affirmation of Palestinian Identity
5. European Apology for Crusades Urged
6. Writer Calls on West to Convert to Islam
7. News From the Islamic World

ARABIC PROMOTED AS LANGUAGE OF SCIENTIFIC INSTRUCTION

Academics attending a seminar called "The Arabic Language and Scientific Culture" urge the teaching of scientific subjects in Arabic, citing successful experiments in this field in Syria and Iraq. In a 1,800-word report on page 10, these academics call for the establishment of a national institute that will prepare reliable translations of scientific books from foreign languages. Dr. 'Abd-al-'Azim 'Anis, professor of mathematics at a teachers training college, says that the great flourishing of learning in the Abbasid age was the result of the translations by Muslim scholars of Greek and Persian philosophical and scientific works. He adds that a similar process now would produce comparable progress. He says that students should be encouraged to take pride in their Arabic language and not become too attached to the languages of others.

Dr. Hamid 'Ammar calls for more scientific publications by professors in addition to the translation of foreign books, saying that this should become the criterion for academic promotion. He notes that experience has shown that students learn more when they study scientific languages in Arabic. 'Ammar criticizes the teaching of foreign languages to children in kindergartens, declaring that this will produce people who are subservient to foreigners.

Dr. Samir Hanna Sadiq says that foreign languages are a means of communication with other cultures, but Arabic must be developed so it can absorb the modern sciences.

Dr. Ahmad Shawqi, professor of hereditary sciences at al-Zaqaziq University's School of Agriculture, says there is greater facility in expressing the modern sciences in Arabic than other languages. To prove this, he cites the successful translation of 25 books on heredity by Dr. Ahmad Mustajir.

Dr. Muhammad 'Ali al-Kurdi, Dean of French at Alexandria University's College of Arts, disputes the view that teaching the sciences in foreign languages and neglecting Arabic and the Islamic religion will encourage progress in the Arab world. He says the opposite is true.

Dr. Usamah al-Khuli, a professor at Cairo University's College of Engineering and an "environmental scientist," demands the closure of all commercial stores and companies that use foreign languages in their transactions or at least the imposition of heavy fines on them in line with a recommendation by the Academy of the Arabic Language.

Dr. 'Atif Nassar, chairman of the Arab Tongue Society, warns of the dangers of cultural invasion and the love of foreign languages, saying this undermines one's sense of belonging to one's nation and stifles creativity.

WRITER SAYS NO CHURCH AND STATE SEPARATION IN ISLAM

A 700-word article by Majdi Salim on page 10 analyzes the causes behind the secularists' "hostility" to religion and their call to separate the state and religion. He says this call is basically a reaction to the behavior of the Roman Catholic Church and the European monarchs in the Middle Ages, but there is no reason why it should apply to Islam. He declares that a call to separate religion from the state in Islamic countries is tantamount to "separating religion from life."

APOSTASY, SEPARATION CASE AGAINST WRITER REVIEWED

On page 1 'AQIDATI publishes a 120-word report saying that a court of higher appeals has adjourned the case of Professor Nasr Hamid Abu-Zayd and his wife Professor Ibtihal Yunus in order to give their lawyers a chance to study the memorandum prepared by the appeal court's prosecutor.

'AQIDATI reminds its readers that it was the first newspaper to publish a report on the appeal court prosecutor's view of the matter. It says that the 86-page memorandum supports the existing verdict passed against Abu-Zayd by a lower court, namely, that he should be separated from his wife on the grounds that his writings show that he is an apostate and because he has refused to make a public repentance.

Abu-Zayd, a professor of Arabic literature, and his wife are now residing abroad. He was originally sued by a group of lawyers under a system known as "al-Hisbah,"

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according to which any member of the public can sue another if he feels he has violated Islamic teachings. His accusers regard Abu-Zayd's writings on the Koran as contrary to Islamic teachings.

KORAN LINKED TO AFFIRMATION OF PALESTINIAN IDENTITY

This issue's front page photo shows Muslim women and young girls in white Islamic headscarfs and traditional Palestinian dress standing in a group and carrying a poster. The poster is not legible, but there is a blue caption under the photo that reads: "By Learning the Koran by Heart, the Palestinians Have Emphasized Their Identity."

The caption goes on to say that Palestinians have drawn strength from the Koran during their resistance to the Israeli occupation forces. It reports that Koran instruction centers are now proliferating in the self-rule areas.

EUROPEAN APOLOGY FOR CRUSADES URGED

Pages 12 and 13 carry a 3,500-word report that discusses the Crusades on the 900th anniversary of their declaration by Pope Urban II. In its banner headline, the report calls for: "A Popular European Apology for the Massacres of the Crusades." A sub-headline reads: "The Declaration of War Is Still in Force. The Vatican Is Urged To Formally Rescind It." The report says that a conference on Christian-Muslim dialogue held at the Swiss Academy for Development marking the 900th anniversary of the Crusades on 25 November 1995 called for the formal rescission of Pope Urban II's decision to invade the Muslim East. The report says that the conferees urged religious leaders to condemn all violence carried out in the name of religion. They declared: "Let us as Christians resist all trends that seek to portray Muslims and Islam as a new threat."

The report cites comments made at the Swiss conference by some Arab participants, including Dr. Najah al-Ghunaymi, a professor at the College of Islamic and Arab Studies for Girls and al-Azhar's representative at the conference. Al-Ghunaymi says he is not seeking a public and loud expression of regret by the Europeans for the Crusades, but he urges better treatment of Muslim minorities in Europe and a "reformulation of the Christian West's relations with the Muslim East in the political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian spheres."

He adds: "The Western method of dialogue with the Muslims must change, especially as the West looks on Islam and the Muslims with contempt. The Western attitude of superiority and arrogance must change."

Al-Ghunaymi does not think it likely that the Vatican and the Western governments will apologize for "massacres perpetrated during the Crusades" and says that Christian political parties are still active and popular in the West. He also says that the Vatican "will not stop financing the proselytizing missions that seek to lure Muslims away from their religion."

He adds that "no one doubts that the old colonialism and its modern equivalent have promoted proselytism in the Islamic world."

'AQIDATI's report, prepared by Ibrahim Nasr, Muhammad al-Abnudi, and Jamal Salim, solicits comments from some Christian Coptic clerics on the issue of the Crusades. They say that the Crusades were not so much Christian wars as political, Western wars.

WRITER CALLS ON WEST TO CONVERT TO ISLAM

A 350-word article entitled "The Western Explosion" on page 20 by 'Adil Dayf, published in the "Muslims Worldwide" section, comments on the phenomenon of suicide, particularly mass suicide, in Western societies, and attributes it to lack of religious faith. In an apparent reference to cult-related suicides, the article says:

"The recent mass suicide in France proves that the West has gone bankrupt and failed to provide its citizens with the desired prosperity. We Muslims praise God for guiding us to Islam, which is the last and ultimate religion."

He continues: "We are proud to present to the West our experience in worshipping God as He should be worshipped while at the same time seeking progress in all spheres of life. Our advice to humanity at large is that there is no hope of success and a dignified life without adherence to Islam, which brings the beneficence of this life and the hereafter to the people. We are proud that Islamic societies do not have the phenomena of suicide and dissolution."

He advises: "If Westerners are really serious about living peacefully with others and providing their citizens with a dignified life, they must study the Islamic religion as a prelude to their conversion to it. This will make goodness prevail among all humanity."

He says that even if Westerners refuse this offer, he assures them that the Muslims are happy and capable of giving them advice on how to improve their lives.

NEWS FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD

This issue's "Muslims Worldwide" section on pages 20 and 21 includes several news items about Muslim

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communities in various countries, including the following: —A 200-word report about a Malaysian province's decision to set up separate male and female checkout counters at supermarkets. —A 300-word report about the services provided by Sri Lanka's Islamic center to the country's 1.2 million Muslims. —A 350-word report about the 14 Islamic societies and centers that propagate the faith in Argentina. —A 700-word report about Welfare Party leader Necmettin Erbakan's failure to form a Turkish government. The report says that the army and the other political parties "reject the Islamic option" and the West is afraid of an Erbakan government because he is a skilled politician who brings to mind the former "greatness of the Ottoman Empire" and promises a "prosperous future free from European restrictions."

—A 400-word report that says Islam is the fastest spreading religion in the United States despite "hostile propaganda and violent campaigns." The report, citing the INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC NEWS AGENCY, says that there are 10 million Muslims in the United States, including 3 million Arab aliens. It adds: "The fabricated and sensational news reports that are published and broadcast about the Muslims fuel a desire among other people to learn the real facts about Islam."

Palestinian Affairs

European Parliament Spokesman Cites 'Arafat 'Verbatim' on Election Outcome

BR2301133996 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 23 Jan 96 p 15

[Interview with Luigi Colajanni, Italian chairman of the European Parliament observers at the Palestinian elections, by Umberto De Giovannangeli in Jerusalem on 22 January: "'Yasir Told Me: The Loser Is Hamas'" — first paragraph is L'UNITA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] "For over an hour, I had before me a contented 'Arafat, more relaxed than I ever saw him in the meetings I had with him over the last two years. 'These elections have been a great demonstration of democracy and civilization by the Palestinian people to the whole world,' he began." This valuable testimony was vouchsafed by Luigi Colajanni, chairman of the European Parliament obervers at the Palestinian elections, one of the first politicians to have the chance to meet the nascent Palestinian state's president-elect. And the pronouncements made by 'Arafat during their meeting without microphones and television cameras carry greater weight than the diplomatic statements issued to the press.

[De Giovannangeli] How did you find 'Arafat a few hours after the official announcement of his election triumph?

[Colajanni] Extremely contented, I would say, but most of all, I met a head of state who is already moving into the future.

[De Giovannangeli] A question that every journalist would have liked to ask him is what the Palestinian National Council that has just been elected will be and what role it will perform.

[Colajanni] It is just what I asked him myself, and 'Arafat's reply was extremely detailed. I will quote him verbatim: "This Council will have full legislative powers, as envisaged, moreover, in the peace agreements with Israel; it will elect the new ministers, pass the budget, and begin making new laws to replace those still in force: Egyptian laws in Gaza, Jordanian laws in the West Bank, and Israeli laws in the Jerusalem district." In other words, it will be a full-fledged parliament with which, I replied, the European Parliament can and must establish official relations at once, as it does with all national parliaments. 'Arafat welcomed my proposal enthusiastically. The decision made by the European troika, which has allocated $5 million for the operation of the Palestinian parliament, also moves in this same direction.

[De Giovannangeli] Nevertheless, this parliament of the territories is in danger of setting out on a collision course with the National Council [PNC], the Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

[Colajanni] The problem remains open and has political and institutional aspects, although 'Arafat seems to have the intention of resolving it in the short term; he himself explained how: "The High Council and the PNC will meet jointly on particular occasions," 'Arafat said, although when saying so, he laid great stress on that "on particular occasions" to emphasize that the nascent Palestinian state is founded on the two institutions democratically elected by the people: the High Council and the president.

[De Giovannangeli] The outcome of the elections has forcefully raised the Jerusalem issue once again. How does 'Arafat, in his new role as head of state, intend to address and resolve this knotty problem?

[Colajanni] Jerusalem is undoubtedly the most difficult hurdle to overcome on the way to a stable peace in the Middle East. Election day itself was enough to remind us of that, with the massive show of force that the Israelis put on in the city and the frequent cases of intimidation of Palestinian voters as we international observers reported. 'Arafat has proved a conciliatory leader on the Jerusalem issue, willing to listen to the other sides' arguments. "Jerusalem can be the capital of two states," he said, "but I do not want it to be divided

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by a wall. No, Jerusalem must not suffer the shame of a new Berlin Wall."

[De Giovannangeli] The elections have yet to be assessed [sentence as published]. How did 'Arafat see them?

[Colajanni] The president did not conceal his pleasure at the support that he had won, but what he wanted to stress most was the high turnout and the overall peaceful atmosphere in which the elections were held. "An extraordinary demonstration of democracy that we have given the whole world," he said.

[De Giovannangeli] Nevertheless, the problem of Islamic fundamentalism remains.

[Colajanni] 'Arafat did not mince his words on that score: "These elections represent defeat for the extremism of the Hamas leaders," he said time and time again. But in this connection, 'Arafat wanted to draw a distinction between the fundamentalist leadership at home — which, he says, "was in the electoral match in the end" — and the Hamas leaders operating abroad in a number of Arab countries. "The latter were the real losers," he said.

Elections Rerun in 2 Gaza Centers Scheduled for 31 Jan

JN2401123596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Election Committee decided to rerun the balloting and voting process at Centers 36 and 37 in the North Gaza constituency on 31 January.

Usamah Abu-Safiyah, general coordinator of the Central Election Committee in the Gaza Strip, indicated that the decision to rerun the balloting and voting process at these centers, which will be held under international supervision, came about because the committee accepted the contesting of the elections by some of the candidates for the Legislative Council.

'Arafat Interviewed by Egyptian Media on Relations, Elections, Charter

NC2301151596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0740 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza, 23 Jan (MENA)— Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has thanked the Egyptian president, government, and people for their consistent efforts in defense of the Palestinian cause. In his first interview with Egyptian media representatives in the Palestinian autonomous areas following his election as president [ra'is] of the Palestinian Council [PC], he said: We view our relations with Egypt under President Husni Mubarak proudly. Palestine has always been the northeastern flank of Egypt. All of Egypt's battles, since the era of Thutmose, have taken place on this land.

'Arafat said: Egyptian-Palestinian relations are cordial, genuine, and historic. They combine all the elements of strength, cordiality, brotherhood, and pan-Arabism. He added: There are new developments represented by the new world order; we do not want events to be at our expense. We want to participate in shaping this new world order. Egypt is doing the same thing. I tell my brother President Mubarak, "Thanks, thanks, thanks."

Commenting on his overwhelming victory in the Palestinian presidential elections, 'Arafat said: The important thing is not the success of individuals, but the success of the Palestinian people's experiment. The elections are very important. They herald a new phase for the Palestinian people, the Palestinian land, and the region in general. He added: The elections are a new start for the Palestinian people because they mark the start of the phase of achieving their aspirations to establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital.

President 'Arafat noted that the Palestinian elections held this week have boosted the peace process. He expressed the hope that progress will be made on the other Arab tracks, especially the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, so that peace will be just.

Asked about the permanent status negotiations, which will start on 4 May, President 'Arafat said: The negotiations will start as soon as possible but not necessarily on 4 May. The Declaration of Principles states that these talks "will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year." It is our right to demand that these talks start after the elections. He explained that there are contacts with the Israeli side to draw up an agenda for the permanent status negotiations, which will cover four basic issues, namely, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, and final borders. He expressed the hope that an independent Palestinian state will be established in one to one and a half years.

President 'Arafat was asked for his view on Israel's request for the cancellation of the Palestinian National Charter. He replied: They seem not to be following or trying not to follow. The charter was amended in 1988. We cannot cancel the charter, but we can amend it, because constitutions cannot be abrogated.

He said that the Palestinian National Charter has been amended several times. He added: It was amended in 1974, after the glorious October war, when it was announced that a Palestinian state would be established on any liberated part of the land. In 1991 it was amended

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when we accepted former U.S. President George Bush's initiative on the basis of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, and participated in the Madrid conference with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Later, the Palestinian delegation became independent. We amended the Oslo Accord in Cairo and followed up on it in Taba and Washington.

'Arafat continued: I am not the one who decides on amendment. It is the Palestine National Council who decides to meet and amend the charter.

He said: We have attained the foundation of a state. There is land and people, independent judiciary, parliament, presidential elections, and a free and democratic legislative council.

Al-Za'nun Says Date for Annulling Palestinian Charter 'Not Sacred'

JN2301174196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, deputy speaker of the Palestine National Council, said the scheduled date for annulling certain provisions in the PLO National Charter is not sacred. Al-Za'nun added that the Palestinian and Israeli parties must set a new date for discussing this subject. In the same context, al-Za'nun said Hebron should be liberated within the next two months.

PNC Speaker Against Amending Palestinian Charter

JN2401105796 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 17

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-DUSTUR—Agencies: Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih, outgoing speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], said that the Israeli decision to allow him to return to Jerusalem is a natural right of every Palestinian citizen.

He said although he is happy with that decision, it came late. He said it should have been made years ago while he was away from his homeland and house in Jerusalem.

In a statement to AL-DUSTUR, Shaykh al-Sa'ih said that after he decides to pack his luggage to return to Jerusalem, he will return to live in his home and on his homeland's soil to resume his life among his sons and kinsfolk and to touch the soil of Jerusalem, breath its air, and feel the purity of its land.

Shaykh al-Sa'ih emphasized that the right to return is a legitimate right that we were denied for years, therefore, all the deportees should return to their country safely and freely after living in exile for years.

On amending the Palestinian National Charter, Shaykh al-Sa'ih said he does not approve of this amendment because the charter had been approved several years ago, and because amending or changing any of its articles requires the approval by a majority of two thirds of the PNC members.

Meanwhile, Yasir 'Arafat, chairman of the Palestinian National Authority, phoned Shaykh al-Sa'ih to inform him of the Israeli prime minister's decision to allow him to return to his house in eastern Jerusalem.

Former 'Arafat Adviser Returns, Vows To Struggle for Peace

TA2301184996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bassam Abu-Sharif, former adviser to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, arrived today in Jericho via the Allenby Bridge after having obtained permission from the Israeli authorities. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has permitted all Palestine National Council members residing abroad to come to the West Bank and Gaza Strip to amend the articles in the Palestinian National Charter calling for the destruction of the State of Israel.

Mr. Abu-Sharif said at the Allenby Bridge that he will continue his struggle for the peace process, bearing in mind that in the past he had declared his opposition to the Oslo agreement between Israel and the PLO.

Abu-Sharif will meet in Ramallah tonight with Raymonda Tawil, mother of Suha 'Arafat, and then he will leave tomorrow for Gaza to meet with Mr. 'Arafat.

[Begin Abu-Sharif recording, in English] In 1988, when I proposed negotiations to make peace between the Palestinians and Israel, I had these scars. I was a victim of an attack. Let bygones be bygones. We are opening a new page — a page of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a new page of cooperation for development of this region. And we both have to work for the globality of peace and globality of progress. [end recording]

Hamas Condemns Sentences Against 'Abd-al-Rahman, Supporters

JN2301182496 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 23-29 Jan 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, condemned the prison sentences issued by a U.S. court on 17 January against Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman and several of his supporters. The sentences,

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some of which amounted to life in prison, were issued after a very long trial on terrorism charges in the United States.

Engineer Ibrahim Ghawshah, official spokesman for the Hamas movement, said that the sentence against Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman shows the extent of the grudges and hostility toward Islam and Islamists. In a media statement, he said the sentences were fabricated after the blind shaykh was falsely charged with planning to bomb buildings, bridges, and tunnels.

Prison sentences were issued against Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman and his supporters in the United States for the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York two years ago.

The Hamas statement urged the U.S. Administration to stop its campaign against Islamists—a campaign that will benefit the Zionists, masters of terrorism and enemies of humanity, instead of the American people. The statement also urged the U.S. Administration to release all of the Islamists in Israeli jails immediately.

It is worth noting that Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq, head of the Hamas Political Bureau, has been in a New York prison since last July, pending his trial and possible extradition to Israel.

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Algeria

IMF Said To Support Algeria's Economic Reforms Program

LD2301193296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The IMF boards of governors met last night in Washington in accordance with the usual course of affairs to review the extended facility agreement signed with Algeria.

According to informed sources, the meeting considered that the association contracts had generally been reached, and that it was worth pursuing them for the benefit of the Algerian economy with the help of the international community. [passage omitted]

Algeria: FIS Denies Rumors of Splits in Islamic Salvation Army

LD2301204296 Tehran IRNA in English 1513 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, Jan. 23, IRNA — The banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) of Algeria has accused the "enemies" of Islam of spreading rumors about alleged discord and divisions in the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA). "The enemies of Islam inside and outside are seeking, as their habit is, to shake the jihad ranks and to sow confusion among Muslims by spreading (rumors) about divisions in the ranks of the Islamic Salvation Army" said a FIS statement faxed to IRNA from Germany Tuesday.

"We, from the fortress of jihad in Algeria, want to assure Muslim people generally and the Muslim people of Algeria particularly, that the Islamic Salvation Army is intact and free from these divisions." In contrast, said the statement, some mujahideen have left the ranks of the "Armed Islamic Group" after they saw the "excesses and violations of sharia." "We welcome every mujahid who wants to join the ranks of the ISA," it said.

The statement also reiterated FIS' allegiance to its leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Belhaj and to the leaders of ISA, headed by al-Sheikh Abu al-Haitham.

Algerian Security Forces Kill 13 'Terrorists'

LD2301124096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0630 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Thirteen terrorists were shot dead by the security forces over three days. In Algiers, nine terrorists were put out of action, including a leader of a terrorist group, shot dead at Bouzarea. The other terrorists were shot dead in Batna, Tiaret and Relizane. Arms were recovered during the operations. At Relizane, the security forces found four hideouts containing weapons and various documents.

Egypt

Mubarak Condemns 'Riots' in Bahrain

NC2301145796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1330 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 23 Jan (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has denounced the current acts of sabotage in Bahrain, saying that such actions are not in keeping with the nature of Gulf citizens but are the result of foreign interventions in Bahrain's internal affairs.

In an interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-SIYASAH, to be published in its 27 January issue, President Mubarak said that the events in Bahrain do not target Bahrain alone but seek to harm all the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

Mubarak reaffirmed that Egypt strongly condemns the riots in Bahrain and stands by the side of its sister Gulf countries against all actions that seek to undermine Gulf security.

Egypt: Official Notes Contacts at UN Over Sudan Issue

NC2301194496 Cairo MENA in English 1736 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 23 (MENA)—Egypt, through its membership of the UN Security Council, is making intensive contacts with the Council's members to discuss the draft resolution sponsored by non-aligned countries on Sudan's involvement in the Addis Ababa incident, Ambassador Sayyid Qasim al-Masri, assistant foreign minister for multi-lateral international relations said today.

The Security Council will discuss the draft resolution next week, al-Masri said adding that the issue has been discussed with Madeleine Albright, U.S. chief delegate to the UN, and the Russian and Chinese ambassadors in Cairo.

Egypt, al-Masri asserted, does not seek to increase the suffering of the Sudanese people. Contacts are under way with the Organization of African Unity [OAU] to urge Sudan to hand over the three persons accused of involvement in the attack on President Husni Mubarak's motorcade in Addis Ababa and impose political sanctions on the ruling regime in Khartoum with a view to forcing it to renounce sheltering terrorism, he said.

On the latest developments in Iraq, Ambassador al-Masri accentuated Egypt's welcome of the positive

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developments in accordance with Iraqi Deputy Premier Tariq 'Aziz's message in which he voiced Baghdad's readiness to launch talks with the UN to find ways to implement resolution 986 on allowing Iraq to sell part of its oil to purchase food.

Al-Masri said Egypt is keen on lifting the suffering on the Iraqi people and added that the deterioration of the situation in Iraq reflects negatively on the entire Arab nation and is an impediment to efforts to establish peace and stability in the region.

On Libya's request to allow its pilgrims to fly to Saudi Arabia al-Masri said Egypt will help with securing for Libyan pilgrims access to the holy places this year as it did last year.

Egypt: 'Door Still Open' for Demanding Return of Elat

MM2401111396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 7

[Report by Muhammad 'Allam: "Cairo: Door Open To Demand Restoration of Egyptian Sovereignty Over Umm al-Rashrash"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo — In an exciting development provoked by the Arab League report (published by AL-HAYAH yesterday)—which said that Israel is still occupying Egyptian territory, namely the village of Umm al-Rashrash (now the port of Elat), which Israel occupied in March 1949, a month after the two sides signed the truce agreement in Rhodes — Egyptian sources have told AL-HAYAH that "the door is still open to Egypt to demand that its sovereignty over Umm al-Rashrash be restored." The sources said that, "one day this land will return to the motherland."

The sources said for the first time that Israel's objective behind the procrastination with regard to the withdrawal from Taba in 1982 and its attempt to fabricate a dispute over it was "to consolidate its seizure of Umm al-Rashrash." The sources pointed out that "Israel's aim was to fabricate a border dispute and cast doubts over the border between Egypt and Palestine under the mandate with a view to making the international arbitration panel's ruling (issued in Egypt's favor on 28 September 1988) the final demarcation of Egypt's eastern border, namely the Rafah-Taba line, hence denying Egypt the opportunity to demand later its sovereignty over the territories east of this line." [passage omitted]

Egypt: MB Spokesman Discusses New Leader, Party

NC2301191696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with MB spokesman Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, in Cairo, by Jihad al-'Idan, in Tehran; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [al-'Idan] Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, will the election of Mustafa Mashhur [as the new general guide following the death of Hamid Abu-al-Nasr on 20 January] lead to a change in the policy of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB]?

[Al-Hudaybi] No. The group's policy and approach remain firm and stable, God willing. Mustafa Mashhur was the first deputy for General Guide Hamid Abu-al-Nasr. He managed things with him, was his right hand, and was informed of everything. Ours is usually a collective leadership; shura is a basic Islamic principle to which we are strictly and absolutely committed.

[Al-'Idan] How did ordinary Egyptians react during the funeral of Hamid Abu-al-Nasr?

[Al-Hudaybi] Thousands of people took part. Some newspapers estimated around 10,000 from every part of society. The leaders of almost every active Egyptian party joined us at the funeral and offered condolences the following day. They all made speeches in which they praised the deceased and announced solidarity with the new guide, praise be to God.

[Al-'Idan] Praise be to God. Recent reports suggest that the MB might establish a political party in Egypt to overcome some complications....

[Al-Hudaybi, interrupting] No, this is not... [pauses] The group long ago announced that it was ready to establish a party to obtain the legal protection enjoyed by political parties. But the State's leadership always rejected this and said it would not accept a party for the MB. It claims that the Constitution and the law do not permit establishing political parties on religious or Islamic bases. We oppose the government in this but we have no chance to convince it of our views. But as for the latest party to proclaim itself, under the name of al-Watan [as heard], a few MB members joined. We did not want to stop them trying their luck. They joined other Muslims — not Brotherhood members — and some Christians in Egypt to form the party. So this party is trying its luck. But it is not the party of the Brothers; it does not represent the MB and is not a front for them. [passage omitted]

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Egyptian Court Overrules Ministry Ban on MB Spokesman's Travel

NC2301185096 Paris AFP in English 1419 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 23 (AFP)—An Egyptian court overruled on Tuesday [23 January] an order by the interior ministry banning the spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] fundamentalist group from leaving the country, legal officials said.

Ma'mun al-Hudaybi attempted to board a flight to Turkey on January 4 but was told by airport security he had been placed on a ministry blacklist banning him from travelling outside the country, they said. When he was not given any explanation for the ban, he appealed against the order.

Al-Hudaybi is one of the leading officials of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has been banned since 1954 and which President Husni Mubarak has accused of backing Islamic militants seeking to overthrow him. A military court sentenced 54 Brotherhood members to up to five years in prison in November. But the organization denies any links to extremist violence.

Egypt: Al-Hudaybi Denies Link Between al-Wasat, Brotherhood

NC2201203396 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 16 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Counselor Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, Muslim Brotherhood [MB] spokesman and deputy general guide; and Abu-al-'Ula Madi have denied that the new al-Wasat Party, an application for whose establishment has been presented to the Parties Affairs Committee, has any relationship with the MB.

In a statement to AL-SHA'B, Counselor al-Hudaybi denied that this party, which a number of MB members have joined, represents or expresses MB views. He added: We have nothing to do with it!

Asked about the Brotherhood's earlier plans to establish a political party, al-Hudaybi said that the plans still exist, but circumstances and the authorities' well-known stance toward the Brotherhood are obstructing these plans. He noted that the Parties Affairs Committee is affiliated to the regime and that the president's remarks about any Brotherhood organization are known.

Engineer Abu-al-'Ula Madi, representative of the al-Wasat Party's founders, has also denied that the majority of its members are from the Brotherhood or that there is any connection between the party and the Brotherhood. He added: This party is the responsibility of those who run it. It is not derived from any other entity or organization. He added that the intention is to set up a party that represents something that does not already exist—namely, an Egyptian centrist current that embodies the majority of Egyptians. He denied claims that the National Democratic Party is a centrist party, saying it is a rightist party.

Sudan

Omdurman Radio: Libya Says Egyptian Media Distorted al-Qadhdhafi Remarks

EA2301151196 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An official Libyan source informed the Sudanese Foreign Ministry today of a message from Mr. Jum'ah al-Fazzani, [Libyan secretary for Arab unity], which says that a statement attributed by the Egyptian media to Colonel al-Qadhdhafi at a news conference, held in the border area of Sidi Barrani during his recent visit to Egypt, was deliberately slanted in order to harm the distinguished relations between Sudan and the Jamahiriyah.

Sudan: Commission Announces Presidential Election Timetable

EA2301192296 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Zayn al-Nahhas, chairman of the General Electoral Commission [GEC], today convened a news conference at the commission's headquarters which was attended by GEC members.

He reviewed the steps taken to hold presidential elections. He announced that polling centers and voters' registers would be ready in all constituencies from 1 February. Nominations of candidates would be conducted from 3 to 15 February to enable candidates to familiarize themselves with voters. [passage omitted]

He said the final register would be distributed on 15 February at the latest.

Answering a question on election symbols, Mr. al-Nahhas said they would be distributed on 16 February and would be followed by election campaigns until 28 February.

He added that the GEC is committed to providing candidates with an opportunity to canvas public opinion. He said that casting of ballots at the presidential polls would begin on 1 March and continue to 12 March. Counting of ballots would begin on 13 March and would continue for three days until all the ballots are counted

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and the results announced at the GEC Headquarters. He pointed out that the GEC will consider any appeal lodged by any complainant.

Khartoum Regime Said To Have 'No Option But To Step Down'

NC2401063496 Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-MASA'I in Arabic 18 Jan 96 p 2

[Editorial: "The Khartoum Regime Is Doomed"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Just as the Iraqi Government pitted itself against the international community several years ago, the Sudanese regime is doing the same thing now without any feeling of responsibility or appreciation of the dire consequences that might befall the fraternal Sudanese people as a result of their government's actions. These actions have placed Sudan in an unenviable position.

The UN Security Council is preparing to call on Sudan to comply with the OAU's request to hand over to Ethiopia the three suspects in President Mubarak's attempted assassination.

Addis Ababa at first made strenuous efforts to persuade al-Bashir's government to hand over those suspects that Ethiopian investigations proved were staying in Sudan. Al-Bashir's regime, however, prevaricated and disregarded the Ethiopian request, forcing the Ethiopian Government to call on the OAU. The OAU then called on Khartoum to hand over the suspects, but Al-Bashir's government persisted in its irresponsible stance. Ethiopia, seeing Khartoum's disregard of the OAU, was obliged to take the issue to the [UN] Security Council.

Sudan has now placed itself in a very awkward position similar to the situation in which Saddam Husayn's regime placed itself when it perpetrated the crime of invading Kuwait and refused to withdraw despite the intervention of numerous regional and international parties that urged it to settle the crisis peacefully.

The al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime certainly knows the conditions which Iraq and its poor people have been reduced as a result of Saddam Husayn's intransigence and his refusal to comply with the international community's demands. Regrettably it appears that this regime, with which the Sudanese people have been afflicted for several years, does not care if its population faces a dreadful fate as a result of their government's insistence on resisting the whole world.

The Sudanese regime knows, of course, that if it hands over the suspects to Ethiopia, it will be exposing its collusion in the attempt on President Mubarak's life and making public the dirty dossier of actions in which it has involved itself. So it persists in its ploys and, rather than confronting the situation with courage, resorts to obvious ruses to get out of its predicament. It accuses Ethiopia of assaulting its border and requests a Security Council meeting to discuss this allegation.

It has been a very simple matter for the Ethiopian Government to refute Sudan's allegations. The al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime now has its back to the wall and will find itself in a very serious predicament unless it hastens to comply with the African and international demands to hand over the suspects.

This regime has committed a grave series of errors against the Sudanese people and its neighboring countries, and is facing serious and rare regional and international isolation. Arab, Islamic, African, and international circles look on it with suspicion. Most of the countries that had tolerable relations with Sudan before the al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime came to power are now hostile to it because of its behavior.

This regime has no option but to step down, because its persistence in power will inflict grave crises on the Sudanese brothers. The Sudanese people and the region would be better off without these crises.

Sudan: Army Commander Says Eastern Border With Ethiopia Stable

EA2201142496 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The commander of the Qallabat military zone has confirmed the stable security situation in the zone, and the preparedness of the Armed Forces and the People's Armed Forces to defend the faith and the homeland. He said this yesterday when he briefed Mr. al-Sharif Ahmad 'Umar Badr, governor of al-Qadarif State, who is visiting Qallabat zone on the country's eastern border with Ethiopia. Addressing worshippers in Qallabat Mosque, the governor said that Sudan is capable of protecting its territories from foreign aggression. He called on the citizens to enroll in the People's Defense Forces to defend the homeland's territory and its faith.

Western Sahara

Polisario Front To Take Part in Identifying Voters

LD2301235496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In an attempt to move the Western Saharan file beyond the impasse it has reached, the Polisario Front has put forward a new proposal to resolve the existing dispute over voters' identity.

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The UN secretary general said yesterday that the Polisario Front had agreed to take part in deciding the identity of a significant number of lists [of voters] against which it had earlier expressed reservations.

According to some sources, the issue concerned roughly half a list, including 100,000 voters put forward by Rabat that the Polisario Front had refused to include and verify the identity of before the beginning of January.

In a report to the UN Security Council, Butrus Butrus-Ghali pointed out that the Polisario Front's openness would allow for the tangible resumption of the voters' identification process. The UN secretary general did not exclude the possibility of the issue becoming complicated once more after a few months, because the Polisario Front's concession only included half the lists put forward by Morocco.

In his report to the Security Council, the UN secretary general stressed that the best estimates suggested a required period of six months to a year to enable resolve the voters' identity problem. [passage omitted]

In the end, we point out that the UN secretary general's report to the UN Security Council came in the aftermath of the tour which the UN special envoy had paid to the region in the period between 2-9 January.

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Bahrain

Iranian Ambassador Denies Involvement in Bahrain Unrest

LD2301140196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Quoting diplomats and the Bahraini people, the French news agency today reported that the wave of unrest continues in Bahrain. Despite a warning given by the army to suppress oppositions, the unrest has not ended.

No pictures have so far been transmitted on the unrest in Bahrain. The Bahraini authorities say, howver, that a number of opponents including several clergymen have been arrested.

Relying on the fact that the clergymen led the recent unrest, two Bahraini newspapers have accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of involvement in the issue but have not given any acceptable reason or presented any document.

The Iranian ambassador in Manama has condemned the accusations and said that the accusations by the two Bahraini newspapers are completely baseless. [passage omitted]

Bahraini Opposition Leader Denies Iranian Link With Crisis

LD2301223196 Tehran IRNA in English 2221 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Jan. 23, IRNA — In an interview in London on Tuesday with the correspondence of the Lebanese daily "AL-SAFIR", a Bahraini opposition figure, Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, categorically rejected any li[illegible] between Iran and the current crisis in his country.

Dr. Mansur, whose father, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, has been detained by the Bahraini government on charges of involvement in the unrest rocking the Persian Gulf island state, pointed out:

"The absence of any official charge against Iran is proof that Tehran does not have any hand in developments in Bahrain." He said the opposition in Bahrain is not confined to Shi'ite Muslims but also includes Muslims of other denominations as well as nationalists who have all closed ranks.

Al-Jamri, referring to the wave of arrests launched by the authorities, said that all members of his family are either in jail or under house arrest in Bahrain.

Security Measures Against 'Instigators' in Bahrain Commended

JN2301153896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0730 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 23 Jan (WAKH)—Bahraini papers today commended the measures by the Bahraini security authorities to preserve security and stability in the country, as well as the decision to arrest members of the group that played a major role in encouraging and escalating the riots and sabotage operations.

The papers' commentaries say the consolidation of security is not subject to bargaining. It is a goal pursued by all because it is the first requirement for development and the best way to lead a better and prosperous life.

The newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says: When the desire for destruction and sabotage culminates in sowing the seeds of sedition and chaos in society and undermining the foundations of national unity, then it is only natural for this country's official bodies and its citizens to take firm steps to nip the sedition in the bud and protect the homeland's march from the tamperers and the schemes of those who incite them from abroad.

The paper asserts that yesterday's arrest by security authorities of the group that recently played a major role in inciting and escalating the riots and sabotage operations was a precautionary and vital measure that came after they tried all civilized means, such as offering advice to the instigators and trying to persuade them to stop these irresponsible acts that only endanger the safety of the homeland and undermine its security and stability, but to no avail.

The paper continues: The authorities made a wise decision to deal with the situation by exercising patience and the highest level of self-restraint before resorting to deterrent measures. This decision embodies the eagerness of the country's leadership to contain these events, which are alien to Bahraini society, with the least possible damage and to give those who are behind the instigation more than one chance to reconsider their actions, return to their senses, and let their consciences be the judge in the hope they stop encouraging acts of sabotage that disturb the peace and destabilize the country.

However, the paper adds, they were not deterred and did not heed the advice. Therefore, it was necessary to rectify the situation and take the legal measures required by the seriousness of the situation. Continued patience with these people meant condoning the vandalism being committed against our homeland—something that should never be allowed under any circumstance.

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Protecting the homeland and guarding its security and stability are priorities and are dictated by national responsibility.

By taking this measure against the instigators, the paper adds, the competent security bodies will succeed in protecting the country from the irresponsible practices of those who masterminded the riots and acts of vandalism. This means that security and stability will be restored to the homeland, and, once again, Bahrain will be what it has always been: a peaceful and safe country.

The paper points out that these events prompt us to turn over a new leaf, leave this transient crisis in the nation's march behind us, resume the march of construction and building in a spirit of loyalty, and work for the advancement and growth of the homeland.

The paper asserts that these are valid aspirations that will be entrenched by the wise decision by the country's leadership. This leadership is eager to reinforce the national economy and create new jobs and investment opportunities to absorb the country's youthful energies in a bid to reinforce the rule of law in the state and develop its institutions by pushing them to keep up with contemporary times. This is a basic requirement for building a modern state capable of facing the challenges of the next century. [passage omitted]

Bahraini Security Forces Continue To Confront, Pursue 'Saboteurs'

LD2301224396 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2140 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 23 Jan — A responsible security source in the State of Bahrain has pointed out that the Bahraini general security forces have continued to firmly confront the criminal acts of the elements of unrest and subversion "which are working to destroy security and stability in Bahrain" in order to preserve security and order, protect the interests and properties of the homeland and the citizens, and foil the criminal design which endeavored to achieve the goals and interests of foreign sides.

The source said in a statement transmitted by the Gulf News Agency [WAKH] this evening that "the security forces in Bahrain have dealt gradually with the denounced crimes committed by saboteurs over the past two days in numerous scattered areas, represented by setting nine deliberate fires, burning three private cars, setting fire to a house in Buri district and to commercial premises in Sitrah district, and also breaking into an office belonging to a private company in Sitrah district, stealing its contents and setting fire to it, in addition to setting fire to a number of power installations."

He pointed out that the Bahraini security men effectively confronted these crimes, and worked toward stopping and ending them, and minimizing their damage. They also managed to prevent and foil a number of criminal acts before they took place.

The responsible security source in the State of Bahrain added by saying: "The general security men in Bahrain have continued their efforts to dismantle the subversive organization and pursue its wings, elements, and tools and have managed with God's grace to apprehend a number of elements implicated in all that, and the necessary legal measures will be taken against them."

The source concluded his statement by affirming that the security apparatus in Bahrain is continuing its measures, intensive security campaigns, and firm operations to deter the elements of unrest and subversion.

Foreign Residential Block Attacked in Bahrain

LD2301164996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Unrest is reportedly continuing in Bahrain. A report received from sources in Manama, capital of Bahrain, states that a residential block for foreigners in Bahrain has been attacked and that two vehicles in the district of al-Badi', in West Manama, have been set on fire.

Bahraini television last night announced that the country's security authorities had detained seven government opposition leaders. They have been accused of inciting the people.

According to the French News Agency, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri, one of Bahrain's clergymen, is among those detained.

Following recent disturbances in Bahrain, that country's foreign minister met the ambassadors of the permanent member-countries of the Security Council, in Manama. Last night Bahrain's army threatened to impose military curfew if disturbances were to continue.

AFP reports that government opponents in Bahrain are calling for the re-opening of parliament and release of political prisoners, among other demands. News sources have not yet communicated any pictures of the disturbances in Bahrain.

Bahraini Dissident on Suppression, British General's Role

LD2401124596 Tehran IRNA in English 1130 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The general-secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, Mr. 'Abd-

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al-Rahman al-Nayumi, has named the widespread popular protest in Bahrain as a spontaneous move and the result of the people's anger towards the policies of the ruling family in the emirate.

In an interview with the Central News Bureau in Damascus today,he rejected the accusations by some Bahraini officials and newspapers of intervention by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the internal affairs of Bahrain.

He expressed his concern over the introduction of military rule in Bahrain and added: Foreign mercenaries and criminals and especially General [Ian] Henderson, the head of the Bahraini Intelligence Service - who is a British citizen - play a crucial role in terrorising and suppressing the people in that country.

He said: All the people in Bahrain demand the reopening of the parliament, the reinstatement of the constitution and the elimination of discrimination between the people and the ruling family.

Meanwhile the Islamic Republic of Iran has rejected [the] accusations of its intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, including Bahrain, at numerous times and called such accusations by some officials and papers in Bahrain as pure fabrication.

'Source' Defends Bahraini Stand on Dispute With Qatar

JN2401093096 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0705 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 24 Jan (WAKH) — The GULF NEWS AGENCY learned from a responsible source that the QATARI NEWS AGENCY's report yesterday on a meeting between the president of the International Court of Justice [ICJ] in The Hague, the Bahraini Foreign Ministry under secretary, and the Qatari justice minister is inaccurate and has intentionally misinterpreted the facts of this meeting. Therefore, the conclusions reached in this statement are void for the following reasons:

First: The State of Bahrain did not declare at this meeting that it accepts the ICJ ruling or that it will implement ICJ rulings and procedures as mentioned in the statement. On the contrary, the State of Bahrain set down at this meeting the firm and consistent stand it has held since the early stages of the border dispute between the two countries. This stand includes accepting the ICJ rulings on the dispute if all the legal bases for looking into this dispute are made available. This means that the ICJ should deal with all aspects of the dispute, including Bahrain's claim of sovereignty over the al-Zubarah area as this is an uncontested legal principle which should be respected.

Bahrain reiterated this point in its recent letter to the State of Qatar to which the latter did not object in its reply letter. The State of Bahrain also reiterated this to the ICJ at this meeting.

Second: At this meeting with the ICJ president, the new legal team representing the State of Bahrain raised a technical point on the need to extend the deadline the ICJ had set in its April 1995 ruling from February 1996 to November 1996 to enable it to study all the ramifications of this case.

Third: Out of respect for King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, who is mediating in this dispute, the State of Bahrain has always believed that there is a need to give the custodian of the two holy mosques the time needed to contribute to solving this dispute within a framework of brotherhood, solidarity, and good neighborliness. The State of Bahrain believes that resorting to the ICJ or other avenues for the settlement of this dispute is only a step that should not prevent his majesty's good offices from attaining their aspired objective because this will be the exemplary solution under the canopy of the sublime values on which solidarity among the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council was based.

From this premise, the State of Bahrain believes that there is no truth to the QATARI NEWS AGENCY statement that the State of Bahrain has gone back on its stand on the ICJ, or that this confirms the soundness of the Qatari stand.

The State of Bahrain has abided and continues to abide by its stand that is based on right and justice and which says that the ICJ is competent to look into the dispute between the two countries if the case referred to it comprises all aspects of the dispute, including Bahrain's sovereignty over the al-Zubarah area. This is so because looking into this case on the basis of only the Qatari demands flagrantly impinges on justice and logic, and cannot be accepted.

Bahraini Papers Comment on Border Dispute With Qatar

JN2401094396 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0640 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 24 Jan (WAKH)— In their editorials today, Bahraini newspapers AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ and AL-AYYAM emphasize the firm Bahraini position since the beginning of the Bahraini-Qatari dispute on border issues. This position does not relinquish Bahrain's historical rights and calls for

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resolving the dispute within the framework of the one family spirit.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says: Bahrain's position is very clear and cannot be distorted or misunderstood. Since the very beginning, Bahrain said clearly that it prefers solving the dispute within the Gulf Cooperation Council and through the fraternal mediation of the custodian of the two holy mosques. Bahrain showed all goodwill and eagerness to provide the suitable atmosphere for the success of that mediation due to its belief in the historical and fraternal relations that link the peoples of the region and its awareness of the huge challenges facing the region and the need to resolve any differences between the council states in a fraternal manner so that the council will be devoted to confronting these challenges.

The paper adds: Although Bahrain has, and continues to believe that this is the ideal framework for solving the dispute with Qatar, it did not refuse the principle of seeking international arbitration and did not refuse international arbitration on condition that the International Court of Justice should rule on all aspects of the border differences without exception. On this basis, Bahrain insisted that Bahraini sovereignty over al-Zubarah be at the core of issues on which the international arbitration issues a ruling.

The newspaper says: Bahrain's insistence is based on its historical and legal rights in al-Zubarah that cannot be ignored or trespassed by meditation or arbitration. Based on this, Bahrain rejected arbitration on the basis of the Qatari request alone and showed readiness to accept arbitration if it deals with all aspects of the dispute. This Bahraini position has legal grounds and is supported by all precedents in international arbitration. Bahrain conveyed this position to Qatar in its recent message, and Qatar did not oppose that the court discuss all aspects of the dispute, including Bahrain's call for sovereignty over al-Zubarah.

Concluding, the newspaper says: Both sides have read history and its facts and documents which emphasize Bahrain's sovereignty over al-Zubarah and its legitimate right to demand this sovereignty, because we were the ones who named it and made it a cultural center, and we entrenched in it a heritage that will not vanish and that cannot be denied. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Sea Border Demarcation With Saudi Arabia 'Practically Settled'

LD2201210496 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The State of Kuwait announced today that the demarcation of the sea border with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was a practically settled matter and would be officially concluded soon after completing very formal measures in view of the warm bilateral fraternal relations and the flexible positive atmosphere that prevailed in the talks of the common border demarcation.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, Kuwaiti first deputy prime minister and foreign minster, said in a statement to KUNA [Kuwaiti News Agency] that the contacts between the two countries over the border were progressing smoothly and coming close to the end without facing any difficulties.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad stressed that this understanding was the basis of the firm Kuwaiti-Saudi relations. He said it was not accidental for them in view of the cordial talks over border issues, which had never constituted a reason for dispute between us, and would be settled soon.

He pointed out the border issue as being practically settled and only required the settlement of its official aspects and the adoption of very formal steps.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahamd also dealt in his statement with his short visit to the kingdom on 20 January and said the talks revolved around the land border posts the two countries had approved at an earlier time. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Paper Says Qatar Decides Not To Air al-Mas'ari Interview

JN2301122496 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 24 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-BILAD learned that Qatar decided not to transmit a television interview with Saudi opposition figure Muhammad al-Mas'ari following intensive contacts the Saudis held with Qatari officials and the intervention of a third party from outside the region.

Informed sources said that Saudi Arabia told Qatar that the Saudis would reply with force if Qatari television transmitted an interview with al-Mas'ari who was recently expelled by the United Kingdom to the Dominican Republic following Saudi pressure. Saudi Arabia

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threatened not to grant the United Kingdom any business deals if it continued to host al-Mas'ari.

Qatari television last week transmitted television interviews with Bahraini opposition members but Manama's only reply was to criticize the Qatari move and to view it as an attack on it.

These interviews were with Shaykh 'Ali Salman, a man of religion who was arrested in 1994 and whose arrest led to wide-scale riots and Mansur al-Jamri, the son of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, one of the most prominent opposition leaders in Bahrain. Following these interviews, there were disturbances and resistance operations which were halted only when the army threatened to intervene.

Although four days have passed since these disturbances, Qatar has not yet condemned them.

Qatar: No Normalization of Israel Ties Before Comprehensive Peace

LD2201153096 Tehran IRNA in English 1516 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Jan. 22, IRNA — Qatar Foreign Minister, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr al Thani says that his country will not have full ties with the Zionist regime until there is a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. "There will not be complete normalisation unless a comprehensive peace is achieved including with Syria and Lebanon," he was quoted saying in an interview with the London-based MIDDLE EAST ECONOMIC DIGEST.

The foreign minister also hinted that the agreement to sell liquefied natural gas to Israel may be linked to the return of Arab land, but declined to say whether it depended on a deal being reached, saying that Qatar was ready to deliver what was signed.

THE JEWISH CHRONICLE suggested more than a year ago that Qatar would be the first Arab state in the Persian Gulf to re-establish ties with the Zionist regime, but earlier this month, it altered its speculation to Oman becoming the first.

Elsewhere in his interview, Shaykh Hamad denied Qatar boycotted the final session of December's Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit was because of the joint border dispute with Saudi Arabia, suggesting it was more to do with the way a new secretary general was appointed.

He also dismissed reports that the deposed emir promised to accept Bahraini sovereignty over the Hawar islands that lie between the two countries, saying that this cannot be accepted by anyone in Qatar.

The foreign minister said that Shaykh Khalifah would never rule Qatar again after being deposed by his son last June. He confirmed the former emir had seized some of the country's reserves, but said that the economic problem caused was "not that big."

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Iraqi National Assembly Elections Date Set for 24 Mar

JN2401082096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0748 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 24 Jan (INA)—It was announced here today that 24 March has been set as a date for holding the Iraqi National Assembly elections.

A presidential decree, issued here today, authorized 'Izzat Ibrahim, vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council and chairman of the Higher Commission supervising the elections in Iraq, to implement this decree.

Another presidential decree was issued postponing the National Assembly elections in areas in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region, where it is impossible to hold elections, until the normal situation is restored.

'Rumors' on Extending Compulsory Military Service in Iraq Denied

JN2301131996 Baghdad AL-QADISIYAH in Arabic 16 Jan 96 p 1

[Report by 'Ali Shamkhi]

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible source at the Defense Ministry denied the rumored extension of compulsory military service. In a statement to AL-QADISIYAH, the source added that the rumored extension of service to five years is baseless and that regulations on the length of military service are still valid without any change.

French Delegation Leader Says Saddam To Meet Butrus-Ghali

JN2301192096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Jan 95 pp 1, 27

[Report by 'A'idah al-Tawil]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jean-Bernard Raimond, head of the French mission to assessing the humanitarian situation in Iraq and a former foreign minister, said that President Saddam Husayn will meet with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali soon.

After returning from Baghdad, he told AL-DUSTUR that his mission's visit to Iraq was aimed at helping the Iraqi Government open a dialogue with the Security Council on ways to sell oil to purchase food and medicine. He said he had a lengthy meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz to coordinate efforts to quickly end the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

The French mission spent two weeks in Iraq and visited Baghdad and al-Basrah in order to learn about the humanitarian situation after five years of an international blockade. It could not visit northern Iraq.

Raimond said that he discussed a number of issues with several Iraqi officials. He said ways to implement Security Council Resolution No. 986 were also discussed, adding that Iraq recognizes the resolution not as final, but as a basis for dialogue. He pointed out that Iraq has a strong desire to open a dialogue without preconditions.

Raimond stressed the need to end Iraq's suffering and to reach a final solution to the deteriorating situation. The United States wants to freeze the blockade for the time being, he added.

Raimond also said: The situation in Iraq is not close to starvation, as some people say. I can say that the humanitarian situation is deteriorating, but it can be stopped in time.

He said he had visited the children's hospital in al-Basrah and met with representatives of the Christian and Shiites, as well as local governors in southern Iraq. He said that the visit was aimed at assessing the humanitarian and political situations, obtaining as much information as possible on the situation in Iraq, and working out ways for the United Nations to monitor armament.

France believes that Iraq's ordeal would be eased initially through the implementation of Resolution No. 986, Raimond added.

He said that before leaving Amman for Paris, he briefed Jordanian Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti on the results of his visit to Iraq.

Deputies Jean-Marc Nesme, from the Union for French Democracy, and Michel Formet, from the Socialist Party, were among the members of the French parliamentary mission, the first of its kind to visit Iraq with the approval of the French Government.

Economic Measures To Curb Iraq's Inflation Reported

JN2301130996 Baghdad INA in English 1200 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Jan 23, INA — Over the last few weeks, President Saddam Husayn has declared war on high prices and inflation and the president assured Iraqis that victory over inflation would be on their side, Baghdad OBSERVER said today. It said that the government had taken fresh measures to boost the economy which has been crippled by the unjust sanctions. Among these measures is stopping the printing of bank notes as they were printed without gold cover. To compensate for newly printed bank notes, the government put in the market thousands of commodities which were previously stored in state-run stores. The

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government also ordered various ministries and other state establishments to adopt new austerity measures. A 25 per cent reduction of cars used by these ministries and establishments has been ordered by the government. These cars have been put up for sale to individuals and the private sector. The government has also decided to cut public expenditure to a minimum and ordered the stop of unnecessary service projects such as constructing new roads which are not necessary. It said that the government, in another attempt to fight hyperinflation, began repricing its subsidized utilities, taking cost and profit into consideration. Prices for telephones, postal services, telex, and transportation have already gone up. It also allowed its banks all over the country to deal with foreign currency and Iraqis to open bank accounts in foreign currency.

The daily said that clearly these new economic measures would soon curb hyperinflation which is Iraq's number one enemy on the economic front.

In fact, Iraqis have started reaping the fruits of these wise economic measures taken by President Saddam Husayn. Now the value of the Iraqi dinar against the dollar is improving and the dinar has been recovering over the last few days, the paper concluded.

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Peres Notes PA Efforts To Stop 'Terrorism,' Collect Weapons

TA2301134996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that Palestinian Authority [PA] officials have started to collect weapons from residents of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, including Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad members.

Reviewing the situation for the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Peres said that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have been exerting efforts to perpetrate terrorist attacks against Israel, but have so far failed.

'Arafat and his men, Peres asserted, are engaged in an organized effort to prevent terrorism. The prime minister added that terrorist leaders like Hawatimah, Habash, and their associates do not intend to return to the territories. They understand, Peres said, that their return would benefit Israel and that they are better off staying in Damascus. The Israeli opposition, however, apparently fails to understand what the terrorists already know. [passage omitted]

Peres on Syria Negotiations, U.S. Involvement

TA2301154496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that Israel and Syria will not deal with borders at the Wye Plantation talks which are scheduled to resume tomorrow.

The negotiators will discuss the water issue, first from the factual level and then with regard to principles. Peres added that the Americans seek to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion this year, whereas Israel, for its part, has made it clear that there is no connection between the negotiations and the Israeli elections. Peres was speaking at the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. [passage omitted]

Israel To Propose Demilitarization as Substitute for Golan Stations

TA2301193696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The negotiations between Israel and the Syrians are resuming tomorrow in Maryland. Tomorrow, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Major General 'Uzi Dayan will present the position that Israel is prepared to forgo its demand for early warning stations on the Golan Heights on the condition that Syria agrees to a sweeping demilitarization and a thinning out of its military forces in the areas south of Damascus. [passage omitted]

Peres Claims Netanyahu Promised Syria Withdrawal on Golan

TA2401062696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said yesterday that he believes Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad has reached the conclusion that peace is the right gamble, but it remains unclear which path al-Asad has chosen to take. Mr. Peres said Syria and Israel have to work out several issues, including those pertaining to security and water arrangements. The prime minister was speaking at a convention of the World Jewish Congress at Jerusalem's International Convention Center.

Prime Minister Peres said that Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu was continuing to send the Syrians messages according to which a Likud-led government would be able to win wide public backing for an agreement with Syria, which would include a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that several days ago, Peres told one of his close associates that the Syrian president was not concerned about elections in Israel because the messages from the Likud had convinced Damascus that negotiating with the Likud would be easier.

Knesset Member Netanyahu categorically denied sending any messages to the Syrians recently, asserting that he was fed up with all these lies which only sought to legitimize Peres' proposals for a sweeping withdrawal which had already been handed to the Syrians.

[A similar report on the resumption of the talks between Syria and Israel on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 24 January states that "a senior Israeli source said that so far, Israel has presented demands on security arrangements that would prevent the danger of a surprise attack." The report adds that "Secretary of State Warren Christopher is due to visit Israel and Syria at the beginning of next month, but a U.S. official says the trip could be put off if the Americans believe Prime Minister Shim'on Peres might call for early general elections," noting that "yesterday, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres indicated the Americans were pressuring Israel and Syria to reach a peace agreement before the Israeli elections later this year." "Prime Minister Peres said Israel countered the American call for a treaty before the elections with a rejection of any linkage between the two, adding that the negotiations have a pace of their

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own. A Washington source believes Christopher could put off his next Middle East trip, after this round of talks in Maryland, if for whatever reason the Americans believe Prime Minister Peres is about to announce he wants early elections. The belief is that a Christopher visit followed by a Peres announcement would give the impression that the U.S. is involved in the early election decision. Prime Minister Peres says he has instructed the Americans not to raise the possibility of an early ballot in their talks with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad."]

AL-HAYAH Reports on Egyptian Claim on Elat Doubted

TA2401104196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Report] The London-based Arabic newspaper AL-HAYAH reports that the Arab League considers the village of Umm Rashrash, now known as Elat, to be Egyptian territory now under Israeli control. Egypt is said ready to demand the restoration of Egyptian sovereignty over the area.

"The Egyptian Embassy in Israel told our Arab affairs correspondent that it has no information about any Egyptian demand with regard to Umm Rashrash, and that the embassy had received no instructions on this matter.

"Ya'aqov Seti, press attache at the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, also told our correspondent that the Egyptian authorities had not approached Israel on this matter. Our correspondent notes that the report on a possible Egyptian demand for sovereignty over Umm Rashrash is included in a report prepared by a junior Arab League official.

"Political sources in Egypt and Israel expressed doubts about the seriousness of the report, which appeared in AL-HAYAH."

Israel Asks Jordan To Permit Passage of Produce to Gulf States

TA2301140196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel has asked Jordan to permit the passage of agricultural produce to the Gulf states. The Gulf countries import approximately $10 billion worth of fresh agricultural produce from Europe annually, and Agriculture Ministry officials are confident that Israel could supply some of this produce at competitive prices.

Our correspondent Yo'av Ya'aqov reports that the director general of the Jordanian Agriculture Ministry is visiting Israel to discuss bilateral cooperation with his Israeli counterpart.

Israeli Minister Shahal on Plan for Reducing Number of Infiltrators

TA2301154596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said that if Prime Minister Shim'on Peres was to fully adopt the plan for defending the dividing line, the number of infiltrators into Israel would drop by 95 percent.

Shahal asserted that approximately 30,000 people infiltrate into Israel every year and that this number has not been reduced following the transfer of areas in Judaea and Samaria to the control of the Palestinian Authority.

Our correspondent Aviv Bushinsky adds that Minister Shahal was speaking during a tour of the Judaea and Samaria District. The district's commanders reported a rise in the number of property crimes, especially car thefts. [passage omitted]

Israel: Right Wing Seen Dispirited in Wake of PA Elections

TA2401112696 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (HAYOM supplement) in Hebrew 24 Jan 96 p 2

[Commentary by Shalom Yerushalmi: "The Unbelievable Has Happened"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The elections for the Palestinian Authority [PA] Council provided the most concrete and amazing expression of the ramifications of Rabin's assassination. These elections laid the cornerstone for the Palestinian state, something that has horrified the right wing, as well as several centrist elements, for the last generation. Because of Rabin's assassination, however, the right wing kept silent. Compared to the giant demonstration held by right-wing leaders in Jerusalem's Zion Square in the summer of 1994 — aimed at protesting the possibility of an 'Arafat visit to Jerusalem — the demonstration held in the same place last Saturday [20 January] night seemed like a polite gathering of WIZO [Women's International Zionist Organization] women. Who would have believed this possible?

Rabin's assassination has temporarily neutralized the right wing's belligerency. The Oslo accords are going ahead without any real opposition. The assassination, with everything accompanying it, has enabled the prime minister quickly to complete the withdrawal from the cities and some villages. Most of the public gave Peres the go-ahead in Rabin's name. Today Yig'al 'Amir

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must be agonizing in his Beersheba Prison cell, seeing that instead of demolishing the Oslo accords — as was his intention — he has only brought about their quick implementation on the ground. Even the greatest skeptics, and I among them, who did not believe the settlers would enable the accord's implementation to proceed, can see a certain compliance with the process, even if this acceptance was given grudgingly and for lack of any other choice.

It appears that the implementation of the accords is splitting the settlers and the right-wing parties. Aharon Domb, spokesman of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, who before the assassination said he would shoot any Palestinian policeman who tried to stop him, today admits he has not encountered any special problems on West Bank roads and said that as far as he is concerned, everything has changed. Rabbi Shlomo Riskin of Efrat, one of the heroes of the controversial Hadagan Hill site, today publicly speaks about self-determination for the Palestinians and wants to establish a joint Israeli-Palestinian Hospital in Hebron. Uri Elitzur, Pinhas Wallerstein, and all the others are saying new things regarding the coordination and cooperation with the PLO.

Knesset Member [MK] Binyamin Netanyahu, who has vociferously warned about what would happen in the wake of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] withdrawal from the cities and the entry of the Palestinian Police into the West Bank, today declares that he will not reconquer the cities from the Palestinians and is concentrating the opposition struggle around the Jerusalem issue. MK Me'ir Shitrit has proposed that the Likud recognize the Oslo accords, thereby obtaining the public's trust in anticipation of the permanent arrangements talks.

Regarding the Gaza Strip issue the right-wing is showing great confusion. In the Knesset plenum last week, Minister Yosi Sarid asked the Likud MK's: Who is in favor of returning to Gaza? Only Dov Shilansky and Moledet's Rehav'am Ze'evi raised their hands. The other MK's wriggled in their seats without any reply, trying to conceal their confusion.

The elections are behind us. If Peres manages to emerge safely from the problematic Golan Heights negotiations and to bring about the cancellation of the Palestinian Covenant, he will nullify Netanyahu's chances of winning the elections, a thing which Likud heads freely admit. The Palestinian entity does not frighten even the settlers living in its midst, and the Jerusalem issue will not hold water — as indicated during last Saturday's demonstration — among other things because the Labor Party repeatedly announces it will not compromise on the city's future. In short, the Likud's information campaign is sounding a false note and is speaking in many voices. Even if the right wing manages to organize a protest, it will not have the same impact it had in the past, because after the assassination there is no room for the kind of aggressive incitement which is so appealing to the media. This is how things look now, but the picture will completely change after the first terror attack against innocent civilians within the Green Line.

Israel: Poll Finds More Willing To Leave Settlements for Payment

TA2401121296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 24 Jan 96 p A4

[Report by Nadav Shragay]

[FBIS Translated Text] Twenty-four hours before a meeting of settlers from Qiryat Arba' who are interested in leaving the settlement in exchange for financial compensation, Peace Now published a survey according to which 51 percent of settlers from urban settlements located far from Jerusalem seek to leave in return for compensation. The survey also indicates a drop in the settlers' opposition to the peace process: 25 percent support the process and only 45 percent are opposed to it (compared with 58.5 percent who opposed the process in August 1994).

The poll, which was commissioned by Peace Now, was conducted by Dr. Ela Heller from the Modi'in Ezrahi research institute.

Ninety-two settlers from Qiryat Arba', Ari'el, Alfey Menashe, 'Imanu'el, and Ma'ale Adumim participated in the poll. They were asked whether they would be willing to leave their settlement with their families in exchange for adequate compensation. Those replying "certainly" were 16.3 percent; 18.5 percent replied "I think so"; and 16.3 percent replied: "Maybe, it depends on the situation or conditions, I have not decided yet."

A study of the settlers' motives for moving to the settlements indicates that 31 percent live in the territories exclusively, or mainly, for ideological reasons. Fifty percent live in the territories out of economic considerations or in order to improve their quality of life.

The survey also examined the settlers' attitude to the possibility of the settlement they live in not being included in Israel's borders. The findings show that only 17 percent say that they will continue to reside in their settlement if this is the case, as opposed to 71 percent who are prepared to leave (of which 7 percent say they will move to another settlement in the territories).

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Jordan's al-Kabariti Welcomes Results of Palestinian Elections

JN2201184296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti has welcomed the democratic and fair elections which were held under the observation of no less than 1,000 international observers, including the Jordanian team of observers.

Al-Kabariti said: We congratulate Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat on his landslide victory in the elections for the post of president of the Palestinian National Authority. We also congratulate members of the Legislative Council who won in the elections, which are a victory for democracy and which support the peace process in the region.

The minister added: We consider this process a great and very important accomplishment and a historic landmark on the road to crystallizing the Palestinian political identity and building the institutions of the civil society until Palestinian independence and sovereignty are declared with the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

He said: We in Jordan will continue to support our Palestinian brothers in their blessed process to restore their legitimate national rights on their national soil.

Asked about the date of his visit to Gaza, the minister said that he will visit Gaza this week on the directives of His Majesty King Husayn.

Jordanian Trade With Iraq To Be Cut by Half

JN2201200996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordan has decided to reduce by half the volume of trade with Iraq this year. An authoritative Jordanian source announced that it was decided to fix the amount of trade with Baghdad at $200 million for this year, as opposed to $400 million, the volume of trade last year.

The Jordanian source said that this decision was made for economic reasons and has nothing to do with the political situation between the two countries.

In Baghdad, the markets witnessed a flood of goods and a drop in prices as merchants anticipate the Iraqi Government to implement the UN resolution allowing it to sell oil so as to import food and basic commodities.

Article Lists Reasons for Cut in Jordan Trade With Iraq

JN2201220196 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD has learned from informed sources that the visit of Iraqi Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih [to Jordan] was aimed at signing a trade agreement between Jordan and Iraq to organize and determine trade exchange.

A responsible source said that the value of this year's agreement was less than that of last year because of Jordan's economic reform program and its decision to limit the circulation of the Jordanian dinar, and because Jordanian exporters are paid by the Central Bank of Jordan. The source also said the measure was aimed at preventing any drop in the value of the dinar.

Jordan has also reduced the list of commodities which it exports to Iraq under the resolutions of the UN Sanctions Committee. This will inevitably reflect on the economy of both countries, and Iraq will consequently suffer a shortage or a lack of certain materials. Among the list of items which will no longer be exported to Iraq are cables, detergents, and soap, as well as Elba House-made buses. Money allocated for vegetable oil has also been considerably reduced, because its raw materials are imported to Jordan in hard currency.

As a result, the production and exporting capacity of many Jordanian factories will be paralyzed. These factories will suffer unexpected losses, a large number of workers will be dismissed, and the economic stagnation in the country will be further aggravated.

In light of this, the Iraqi side tried to adhere to the ceiling of the previous protocol in order to keep Jordanian commodities, particularly food, flowing into Iraq, which badly needs it because of the blockade and because Iraq lacks the hard currency obtained from Iraqi oil sales. The Iraqi side had no choice but to agree to Jordanian justifications for a lower ceiling of trade exchange in order to maintain economic and trade relations with Jordan.

The source also pointed out that Jordan was getting Iraqi oil at half its true price. Regarding the possibility of a building pipeline to Israel, the source dismissed this as a rumor, and said that President Yasir 'Arafat's proposal to purchase Iraqi oil was turned down by the Sanctions Committee.

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Lebanese Military Seeks Death Penalty for Antoine Lahd

NC2301174596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] First Military Investigating Judge Riyad Tali' today issued his indictment in the case of retired Staff Major General Antoine Lahd. He demanded the death sentence for Lahd on charges of recruiting in an enemy army, carrying arms in the ranks of the enemy and its collaborators, slicing off part of Lebanese territory from the State's sovereignty through violence, committing terrorist acts, leading an armed gang to rob the State and citizens, killing and attempting to kill numerous Lebanese through artillery shelling, and seizing and plundering citizens' freedoms for extended periods.

Israeli Forces 'Kidnap' 9 Citizens from Rshaf, Lebanon

NC2401071496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces have kidnapped nine citizens, including four women, from the occupied village of Rshaf and took them to an Israeli Army post in the occupied town of Dibil. The inhabitants of Rshaf informed the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL] command of the incident. The UNIFIL command began contacts with the Israeli enemy authorities to secure the release of the kidnapped citizens.

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Syrian Press Views Current Round of Maryland Talks

JN2401095796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0555 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Will the Maryland Talks Deal With Substantial Issues?" AL-BA'TH says: A new round of talks on the Syrian-Israeli track will be held today amid an atmosphere of expectation and little optimism. Despite the U.S. participation in these talks, the reason behind this expectation and the minimum level of optimism are the recent Israeli statements which coincided with the several delegations' visits to Washington, which were crowned by Foreign Minister Baraq's visit. These statements have disavowed previous stands which clearly embodied much optimism over reactivating and advancing the peace process.

AL-BA'TH stresses: The previous Israeli statements, which followed Israeli Prime Minister Peres' first visit to Washington, were not enough to reactivate the peace efforts because they have continued to be sweet-coated words which so far have not been accompanied by any frank and clear announcement on commitment to implementing the principles and bases of the peace process which is based on the need for a full withdrawal from the occupied Golan and southern Lebanon.

AL-BA'TH points out the ideas which Israel has once again presented as they are; namely, peace, upgrading the level of negotiations, using the early elections card, focusing on normalization and water, and other issues which have nothing to do with the essence of the peace process. Israel has thus far been ignoring that advancing the peace process toward its ultimate objective hinges on dealing with the essence of this process, not with its superficialities. Syria has adhered to this principle since the Madrid conference. By continuing to ignore the substantive issues, Israel is wasting time. The second Maryland round will put Israel to a real test.

In its commentary under the headline "Peace in Deeds," the newspaper TISHRIN says: On the eve of the resumption of the Maryland talks, Israeli officials are trying to give the impression that Israel has done all it can to reach an agreement soon, and that Syria is slow. The objective is to hold Syria responsible for any failure in these talks in case they actually fail.

TISHRIN stresses: All sides know that Syria has exerted every possible effort to make these talks succeed, and has shown readiness to establish a just and honorable peace in the Middle East which can hold in the face of developments and events. In return for peace, Syria has only called for the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions which do not allow the occupation of the others' land by force, and which call for the Israeli forces' withdrawal to the 4-June 1967 lines.

TISHRIN adds: Syria has expressed its readiness to establish ordinary ['adiyah] peace relations, and to meet the requirements of the peace process. Out of its faith in the importance and sanctity of peace, it has agreed to make security arrangements to reinforce peace, providing that they should be reciprocal [mutabadalah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah], and do not encroach on sovereignty. Do these just and right Syrian demands obstruct the achievement of peace?

TISHRIN notes: The current round which will begin in Maryland today will basically be devoted to security issues. It is supposed to achieve a breakthrough. This is if Israel actually and practically complies with the conditions of the just peace.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: It is true that Israel has shown some seriousness, and its officials said that peace is more important than elections, that Syria is a major peace partner, and that peace with Syria will lead to a comprehensive peace in the region. However, intentions alone cannot make peace, and they should be translated into concrete action.

In its commentary "The Decision Stage," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Observers attach extreme importance to the two rounds of the current talks in Maryland to determine the future of the Syrian- Israeli track, and consequently, the entire peace process due to the key importance of the Syrian track to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

AL-THAWRAH notes: The two rounds, which will pave the way for a new Christopher tour of the region, will, to a large extent, determine the signs of practical progress or failure in bridging the gap between the Syrian and Israeli tracks.

AL-THAWRAH clarifies: The progress awaited by the world will undoubtedly hinge on Israel's readiness to abide by the principle of full withdrawal for full peace, and its acceptance of the principles of equality [tasawi], equitability [takafu'], and evenness [ta'adul] regarding the reciprocal security arrangements. Here there should be a firm decision. True progress will be achieved if Israel makes this firm decision and stops setting impossible preconditions, something which has previously obstructed the negotiations and stalemated the peace process at the point of the early warning station which is unjustified during the age of advanced technology in the field of reconnaissance and surveillance. Based on this, the required progress will continue to be substantive if an understanding is reached on its objective elements.

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The Syrian-Israeli track will then witness a serious and accelerating breakthrough toward the achievement of the aspired objective. Progress on the Syrian track will lead to progress on the Lebanese track. Progress in the just and comprehensive peace process will bring an atmosphere of security and stability to the entire region in the interest of its peoples as well as the peoples of the whole world.

Syrian Radio Urges Israel To Commit to 'Equitable' Security Arrangements

JN2301195996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1234 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: With the sponsorship and participation of the United States, the third round of the Syrian-Israeli talks will begin in the U.S. state of Maryland. Reports say that this round will specifically address the proposed security arrangements after an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. Israeli officials have said they attach extreme importance to this round.

In order to ease Israel's fears, Syria agreed to institute security arrangements, provided they are reciprocal and equitable [mutabadalah wa mutakafi'ah] and do not undermine sovereignty. Syria rejected the conditions proposed by the former Israeli Government, including ground observation posts, because they would be impossible and would consecrate the occupation. Blowing security apprehensions out of proportion will, in the final analysis, mire the peace process.

Israel should make reasonable and balanced proposals that observe the principle of equitable security and do not undermine sovereignty or violate the security of one party to the benefit of the other. Israel should display flexibility. It is the party that shows unjustified fears, despite the fact that peace is the optimal guarantee of security and the foundation of stability in the region. The peace that Syria looks forward to is a just and comprehensive one that returns rights to their owners, removes all the manifestations of injustice, suppression, and occupation, and paves the way for a new climate of confidence.

Reciprocal security arrangements first require Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan. The arrangements will follow the withdrawal. It is very important for the Israeli Government to publicly announce it intends to withdraw beyond the 4 June 1967 lines in implementation of the Security Council resolutions that deem the forced occupation of the lands of others inadmissible. So far, nobody has heard a forthright statement by the Israeli Government on full withdrawal, which is key to advancing the peace process.

The Syrians are waiting for a clear statement that would dissolve their fears and remove their suspicions about the mixed positions in Tel Aviv, where some hint there is a possibility for full withdrawal while others reject a return to the June borders. The incontestable fact is that the stumbling of the peace process on the Syria track is the net result of the ambiguity of the Israeli position on the question of full withdrawal.

For the peace process to achieve the desired progress, it is quite important for Israel to adhere to the two basic conditions of the peace process: comprehensive withdrawal and equitable security. This will help accelerate the process, overcome the obstacles, and possibly pave the way for a real agreement this year.

Syrian Paper Calls Palestinian Elections 'False,' Unrepresentative

JN2301209296 Damascus AL-BA'TH in Arabic 21 Jan 96 p 3

[From the "With the Events" column by Ilyas Khuri: "False Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite all the exuberant propaganda campaigns by the advocators, godfathers, and patrons of the Oslo Agreement; despite the numerous supervision committees charged with monitoring the elections to ensure they were fair and that their proceedings and results were not tampered with; and despite all the allegations and claims that they constitute the beginning of the Palestinian state, yesterday's self-rule elections to select the local councils [as published] and the president of the authority were very far from democracy and freedom. They were also very far from expressing the will and desire of all sectors and factions of the Palestinian people and from preparing the ground to establish a national independent state, both in word and in deed.

It is now clear to everyone that these elections were conducted within a limited, predetermined framework that will serve the Oslo Agreement with all its names and forms, establish the symbols of the Oslo Agreement as the sole representatives of the Palestinian people, and provide legitimacy to the continued Zionist occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

The majority of the Palestinian people in Jerusalem in particular, and in the diaspora in general, were denied any participation in these elections. They include more than four million refugee and displaced Palestinians who will be ignored and denied all their national rights within the context of the final solution stipulated in the Oslo Agreement.

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In addition, the opposition inside the self-rule areas were completely denied any possibility of participating in the elections or ensuring the victory of their representatives who oppose the self-rule agreement. This prompted several international observers who supervised the elections to accuse both the self-rule authority and Israel of jointly suppressing all those who opposed and refused to join the Oslo Agreement.

Based on the above information, the outcome of these false elections was known in advance. Only those who support the Oslo Agreement would win, not any other faction that opposes the self-rule agreement and demands the achievement of the interests of all sectors of the Palestinian population, not just a handful of people who abandoned the Palestinian cause for a cheap price: self-rule that means no more than tackling the municipal affairs of citizens in the West Bank and Gaza.

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Afghanistan

Hekmatyar Radio Queries Validity of Kabul Cease-Fire

LD2301184296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0240 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Kabul administration has announced a unilateral cease-fire on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. The statement asks the opposition to accept the so-called Islamic State, to stop firing rockets, and to reopen all roads. The statement also concedes that problems can be resolved through talks. It says that the [election of] leadership is the right of the nation and belongs to the people. The statement once again ambiguously says that the state has always been ready to transfer power. It has asked for the help of the Afghan leaders, and has said that the Afghans can resolve their problems through talks without foreign interference. [passage omitted]

The Kabul administration has proposed talks in the past too. However, the aim of those proposals was that the opposition should formally recognize the Kabul administration before talks would be conducted with them. This means that the Kabul administration's opponents should first recognize it officially and then its leaders would bestow royal compassion upon them.

A few days ago also the Kabul administration issued a statement on the transfer of power, the central point of which was that instead of Mr. Rabbani another jehadi leader should become a hostage at the hands of the sectarian forces of the Supervisory Council [Shura-ye Nezar]. Much propaganda was launched by radio Kabul, and poor Mr. Sayyaf visited Jalalabad several times in this connection. He met with some jihadi leaders and commanders and even extended the string of his talks across the border. However, Mas'ud's four-point plan ruined all his efforts.

Now the Kabul administration has issued a statement on a unilateral cease-fire on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. Our oppressed nation has the right to ask the rulers in Kabul which of their previous unilateral cease-fires, arranged through domestic and foreign efforts, has been respected by them. [Words Indistinct] Which of the agreements — the shameful Peshawar agreement, the Islamabad, Jalalabad, and Mecca agreements, or the resolutions of the resolution and settlement council and the Herat council convened by you — have you observed? How can you now ask your opponents to observe a cease-fire? You consider talks the only way of resolving problems and ask the opposition to open the highways, whereas it was you who, drunk with power, disregarded the wishes of our faithful nation and the martyrs and orphans. Yet again you want to deceive the nation through such a meaningless statement while you ignore the issue of the formation of a government in line with the wishes of the nation and with the agreement of all involved forces. Like Najib, you offer the issue of power vacuum as an excuse. [Words indistinct] whereas you depend on foreigners for the prolongation of your power and on the opposition for the supply of goods needed by the people in the areas under your control.

Two More Groups Reject Kabul Ramadan Cease-Fire Offer

LD2401121696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two more of the groups opposed to the Afghan Government have rejected the proposal made by that country's president to observe a cease-fire during the blessed month of Ramadan. According to a Central News Unit report from Islamabad, in addition to the Taleban group, the movement of the north of Afghanistan, led by 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, has rejected the proposal, and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] has made the stepping down of Rabbani from power a precondition for accepting a cease-fire.

The Hezb-e Eslami has also declared that it is opposed to the reopening of the roads to Kabul. The United Nations has warned that, if these roads remain closed, 60 percent of the residents of the capital will not be able to obtain the food they require. In his proposal for a one-month cease-fire, Rabbani also stated that the roads to Kabul should be reopened.

Solution to Afghan Citizens' Difficulties 'Must Be Found'

LD2301214996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Commentary by BAKHTAR political commentator]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The imposition of prolonged fighting and the constant firing of rockets on Kabul have caused enormous difficulties for Kabul's citizens over the past three years [words indistinct].

This destructive fighting, mostly with foreign support, pursuing the hostile objectives of the enemies of the Afghan people, has inflicted most serious blows on the city's structure and caused heavy loss of life and material damage as well as immigration problems. The blockade of Kabul, which is in line with the hostile policy of the enemies of the Islamic State, continues. Despite repeated requests from peace-seeking sources

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and international charity organizations, the Taleban group stubbornly continues the blockade.

In a statement issued recently on the occasion of the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan, the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] once again expressed its interest in peace and declared a unilateral cease-fire. It asked for the opening of supply roads to create a suitable climate and to remove the difficulties of the citizens of Kabul. The Taleban group, who are claiming the absolute enforcement of the Islamic shari'ah, must reopen the supply roads out of respect to the sacred month of Ramadan, and in consideration of the difficulties of the people of Kabul. [passage omitted]

Those who work hard in our country to remove the difficulties of the Muslim people are surely doing it to satisfy Almighty God. And those who embark on inhumane actions, fire a barrage of rockets and blockade the supply roads, are those who have no links with Islam.

In observing the painful difficulties of the Muslim people of Kabul, every human being with feelings comes to the conclusion that a way of solving the citizens' difficulties must be found.

India

India Says 'No Change' in Position on Test Ban Treaty

BK2301160296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi has firmly stated that there is no change in India's position on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman today denied a newspaper report that India has given in to pressure and said such a report is baseless and unfounded. He said India supports negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but it should have a commitment to universal and comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, said India has been voicing its concern, as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is not an end in itself. He was speaking at a function in Calcutta.

Delhi Newspaper Article on U.S. Aversion to Nuclear Tests, BJP

BK2401111396 Delhi DAINIK JAGRAN in Hindi 20 Jan 96 p 6

[Article by Aalok Tomar: "U.S. Pressure: A Consequence of India's Infirmity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems that no one could find free time during the celebrations to pay any attention to the commentary published by THE NEW YORK TIMES on 1 January of this year that alluded to sources who were contacts in the U.S. Defense Department. The commentary deserves special attention because of its headline— "Dangers From India"—and because of the contents, which can be summarized in just two claims: that India has either already made or is soon going to make a nuclear bomb and that Narasimha Rao's Government is likely to be replaced by a Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

In order to understand why a powerful country like the United States—which possesses the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world—is so unnerved by the prospects of India also making a nuclear bomb or by a likely change in the Indian Government, it is necessary to view the salient points of the aforementioned commentary. They are:

"France and China, defying world opinion with impunity, have conducted many nuclear tests. Now India, which conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, is also reported to be intending to conduct some more nuclear tests 'on its own.' What confounds the situation all the more is India's likely refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Most certainly, India's actions would not only increase tensions in South Asia, but they are also going to seriously damage world wide nuclear disarmament campaigns...."

"According to U.S. intelligence experts, India has completed its preparations for conducting the nuclear tests. They confirmed this fact with evidence procured by their spy satellite photography of land activities in India. Although the Indian Government has strongly denied it, the existing Rao Government has grown quite weak because of the many setbacks suffered recently on the election front, and the prominent Hindu nationalist party (the BJP) is quite enthusiastic about conducting the nuclear tests. According to a recent survey conducted in India, 62 percent supported India carrying out the nuclear tests...."

"India has long opposed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. India's plea is: Why should nonnuclear countries sign it when they do not possess nuclear weapons. It would have been better had India, for the sake of gaining credibility, first signed this treaty and then asserted its viewpoint. Now India is putting forth its condition that it will sign such a treaty only when all those countries equipped with nuclear weapons announce their timeframe for total nuclear disarmament. Although this demand appears understandable, it is not practicable...."

"The main reason for growing tension in South Asia is due to the fact that both India and Pakistan are hell-bent

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on amassing missiles and developing nuclear technology. If India conducts the nuclear test, it must affect the Kashmir problem. The United States can render help to India in the matters of security, technology, trade, etc., to allow the Rao government to give up the idea of a nuclear test. India must realize, however, that it can never win the race for nuclear weapons; nor is this race good for India's security interests."

Even though one may be quite guarded in assessing the meaning in these quoted passages, it is clear that this smacks of a hidden threat and a temptation to India, while also revealing the U.S. fear of a developing country becoming a superpower. First, the United States objected to India conducting a nuclear test in Pokaran in 1974 "on its own." The implied meaning is that India should have also consulted with the United States before conducting this test. For the United States to remain a superpower, it is necessary that every action—whether right or wrong, meritorious or sinister—that is taken in the entire world either be with its help or at least with its prior approval.

Even so, to acquire any information, the United States does not require active participation or a willingness to help. It has a huge network of CIA and many other intelligence agencies that is capable of detecting any action anywhere in the world. The United States also has its spy satellites in space to reconnoiter such actions. It is strange that persons like External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Home Minister Chavan, who are in the habit of raising a diplomatic hue and cry on every occasion, could not see something fishy in the U.S. intelligence report confirmed by Pentagon sources.

After all, THE NEW YORK TIMES is not a one sheet tabloid; it is one of the most respected U.S. dailies, in which all government news items bear official confirmation. Although it is not many, about 500-600 copies of the paper also come to Delhi and are read by Prime Minister Rao, other important ministers of his cabinet, and officials. Hence, it is not possible that they may have missed this important news item. Perhaps, however, they were all too busy to devote any attention to it. While Pranab Mukherjee was busy distributing the budgeted amount for his party's canvassing in the coming elections, Chavan was frantically trying to woo Muslim votes, but without any success. Rao busied himself by announcing a variety of dates for the elections. They were too preoccupied to read this fabricated news item maligning India's image and disclosing the extent of foreign intelligence intervention in our internal affairs and to respond properly.

It is true that the United States heads the list of countries investing in India in this era of the "globalization" of our economy. It is also true that among Nonresident Indians (NRI's), those who have either promised or actually invested in India are mostly U.S. green card holders. Does this mean, however, that we should continue to tolerate U.S. hooliganism in the hopes of better trade and profitable high- technological transactions with this superpower? It is equally true that the United States achieved the unchallenged status as the only superpower because no other country or countries strove even to claim a regional status in the same category. The United States is a superpower because, despite being such a long distance and almost 24 hours away, it is keenly interested in South Asian affairs.

This superpower's unusual interest also betrays its not very fair intentions. After all, what the United States did earlier—and is still doing—in Vietnam and Cambodia, or what it did in Iraq, which is in our neighborhood, just a few years ago, was certainly not "a sacrifice for peace." Neither Gandhi's concept of nonviolence nor Nehru's "Pancasila" doctrine ever recommended pontification on peace matters while sitting on a pile of skeletons!

The wielders of power at the Pentagon (the U.S. defense headquarters building also containing the offices of the C!A) [as published] would not have so outrageously and blatantly threatened France and China or maligned it on the basis of fabricated reports, as they did in India's case, even if they had received confirmed intelligence reports on Chinese and French involvement in nuclear activities. On the contrary, when China openly declares that it will conduct nuclear tests and will, if necessary, use nuclear weapons, the Pentagon never even dares to mention China's intentions in any of its communiques or official press releases.

China is one of the countries (besides the United States and others) that has "veto" power to reject any UN resolution. That is why the United States would never dare to antagonize China or mention the independence of Tibet. India, however, is a hapless cow to the United States. They have the temerity to threaten India for no rhyme or reason and even to link the Kashmir and nuclear test issues. If the United States really has courage, why does it never mention Tibet's status?

The U.S. game, however, is very clear. Because of a continued lack of resources and means, Pakistan is a poor country and, therefore, quite exploitable. Moreover, the continuous hide-and seek game in Pakistan between the military brass and democratic administration adds to its helplessness. With this continuing situation, even a tiny country like the Maldives, not to mention a superpower like the United States, could have tamed Pakistan without any difficulty. It is unfortunate, however, that Pakistan always chooses to play into U.S.

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hands, rather than resisting the role of a pawn in the U.S. game of aggrandizement and realizing its immediate- and long-term interests in achieving better relations with its neighbors. Pakistan is also well aware that the bogey of the Afghan rebellion was created by the United States to settle its old score with the erstwhile Soviet Union, and Pakistan continuously suffers from the dire consequences. Yet Pakistan fails to resist the U.S. actions. We can only sympathize with Pakistan over the plight into which it has thrown itself.

One more part of the terse commentary published in THE NEW YORK TIMES is important to us because of its political interpretation of the Indian scene. This part portrays U.S. fears over the prospect of the Hindu nationalist party (BJP) forming a government in India. Thankfully, it is not necessary thus far for the BJP or any other political party in India to acquire a certificate of worthiness from the United States. Nevertheless, U.S. worries over the BJP assuming power require careful consideration, especially when the BJP has never been viewed as a party antagonistic to the United States.

The most important reason why the United States is so opposed to the BJP is not as much the party's willingness to choose the nuclear option as its continuous opposition to various U.S. multinational companies like Pepsi, Coca-Cola, Kentucky Fried Chicken, or McDonald's, which are striving to exploit gullible Indians. It must be clearly understood that the first priority of the United States is its business or trade prospects; even its superpower status assumes a back seat. Moreover, its superpower status depends only on its economic capacity and its power to wield economic hegemony. With trade considerations foremost in its mind, how can the United States tolerate opposition to the sale of sauces, potato chips, cold drinks and other items by its huge companies, whose sale proceeds are essential to launch spy satellites and reconnoiter various activities in the world? We know quite well that the United States has objections to the BJP's "nationalist" stance, but will someone enlighten us on the whys and wherefores of this objection?

Delhi Ties to Tehran Said Crucial for Regional Peace

BK2401114696 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 23 Jan 96 p 8

[Article by J.N. Dixit: "Indo-Iranian Ties Crucial for Regional Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IRANIAN Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati was in Bombay and Delhi between January 9 and 13. His formal objective was to participate in the international conference organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries in Bombay. Mr Velayati, however, took the trouble to visit Delhi for a day and a half as the Iranian leadership was keen that he utilise the opportunity to have discussions with our Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee and with Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. This was the first major visit by an important Iranian leader after that of President Rafsanjani to New Delhi last year.

Mr Velayati told Mr Pranab Mukherjee of the high importance Iran attaches to its relations with India which not only have positive bilateral potentialities but can lay the basis for strong political and economic relations between the South Asian, West Asian and Central Asian regions. Mr Velayati delivered an invitation to Prime Minister Rao to visit Iran.

There has been some speculation that the high level discussions of Mr Velayati in Delhi and India's prompt response to Mr Rafsanjani's invitation to Mr Rao are in some manner a reaction to the recent downward slide in Indo-US relations. This is a simplistic view. While India is concerned about certain trends in the US policy towards the South Asian region, our relations with our important neighbours cannot be a reactive phenomenon arising from our relations with a superpower.

Our relations with a neighbour like Iran are of fundamental and continuing importance both due to historical reasons and contemporary economic, political and strategic considerations. These relations have been consciously structured since 1991 on the basis of mutual interests despite certain differences of opinion on issues like Kashmir, or the hurdles that we have faced in expanding the content of bilateral economic and technological cooperation. The hurdles are not only due to external diplomatic pressures aimed at isolating Iran, but also due to political and resources constraints affecting both India and Iran.

The first point to note regarding Mr Velayati's discussions is that it is an affirmation of India's policy that it does not agree with those powers which wish to isolate Iran. India believes that strengthening of Indo-Iranian relations is an important element for ensuring regional development, peace and stability. Iran shares this assessment. Mr Velayati emphasised during his public pronouncements, his high-level discussions and personal conversations that Iran is committed to strengthening and expanding Indo-Iranian relations and also playing the role of a catalytic factor supportive of India's efforts at establishing close relations with the Central Asian republics.

Countries of the Gulf region are facing trends of change, both social and political. Higher levels of literacy and prosperity have led to greater political consciousness

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and aspirations for democratising political structures in these countries and modernising their economies in a manner more responsive to the aspirations of an average subject or citizen. King Fahd's retiring from power on medical grounds and Crown Prince 'Abdallah's succeeding him in Saudi Arabia is a major political development. The general assessment is that, compared to King Fahd, King 'Abdallah is more conscious of the importance of consolidating Saudi Arabia's position as an Asian power. He is also inclined to attach more importance to expanding relations with Asian countries.

The feeling in Iran is that there is a greater possibility of a realistic and non-confrontationist relationship with Saudi Arabia under King 'Abdallah. Despite the linkages and dependence of the countries of the Gulf with the United States and the Western powers, developments over the last year indicate that there is a growing feeling among the Arab countries that isolating Iran or sharing the confrontationist approach of the US towards Iran is not in their interests.

Iran-Pakistan relations are going through a critical phase due to developments in Afghanistan instigated by the Taleban and in the context of the simmering Shia-Sunni antagonism in Pakistan itself. The expectation that Taleban's initial military successes would be followed by their consolidating political control over Afghanistan has not been fulfilled yet. All reports and assessments indicate that Iranian authorities have been in close touch with the Rabbani Government and with Pakistan. The Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Dr Boujerdi, has played an important role in trying to defuse political and military tensions in Afghanistan, perhaps more effectively than UN special envoy Mestiri. We now have information that as a result of negotiations undertaken in the beginning of January, the Rabbani Government has come to certain political agreements with the Wahadat Afghan Mojahedin supported by Iran to counter Taleban.

There is also information that when Mr Velayati visited Pakistan just about a week before he visited India, Pakistan expressed a willingness to cooperate with Iran, in fact avail of Iranian assistance to stabilise the anarchic and unmanageable situation in Afghanistan created by the Taleban. One suspects that the belated awareness of the impossibility of structuring a Pakistan-dominated Afghan polity, Islamabad is learning to be realistic in seeking cooperation from the wiser and more practical Iranian leadership. There is a convergence of interests between Iran and India in preventing Afghanistan from becoming a base for extra-regional powers, which has negative political and strategic implications for both countries in the Central Asian region.

If Pakistanis give a deep thought to their own long-term basic interests, they would realise that their interests have a commonalty with the interests of Iran and India. Despite continuing American pressure on West European countries not to expand their ties with Iran, France, Germany and Italy are systematically expanding their economic, technological and investment relations with Iran. Even business circles in the US are not happy about the narrow political orientations of Washington's Iranian policies.

Iran's relations with Russia and China are excellent. Iran considers the Central Asian republics as a special area of interest. The railway connection between Mashad and Turkmenistan is being upgraded. Similarly, surface transport arrangements from "Bandar- Abbas" to Mashad are being improved. Despite the war with Iraq, and the continuous pressures which have been generated on Iran since its revolution, the Iranian leadership has managed the period of ferment and transition in a practical and reasonable manner. Iran's political and cultural ethos has always been sophisticated, underpinned by eclectic humanism, regardless of the political regimes which have come and gone in that country, and the fervours and ideological intensities which characterise any society from time to time.

It is in the context of these trends that India has to fashion its relations with Iran. Iran's views on Kashmir have been a matter of curiosity and concern to India. When Mr Velayati was asked about it this time, his response was prudent and practical. He said Iran respects India's territorial integrity. Iran is equally anxious that India create an atmosphere of reason and calm to find a political solution, meeting the aspirations of the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

Brazilian President Arrives in New Delhi on State Visit

BK2401091896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Brazilian president, Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, arrived in New Delhi today on a four-day state visit. He was given a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan [President House]. The president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, and some of his cabinet colleagues welcomed the visiting president. Mr. Cardoso will be the chief guest on Republic Day.

Talking to newspersons, the Brazilian president supported the idea of India becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council. He said countries like India deserve to be permanent members of this important world body. Mr. Cardoso, who is accompanied by

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a high-level business and official delegation, said his country seeks to cooperate with India in different fields like science and technology, and agriculture. During his stay, he will have discussions with Indian leaders to expand trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

CBI, Official Spokesman Comment on Rao's Role in Scandal

BK2401041296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] says that there is no corroborative material to support the statement by the prime accused in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case, Mr. S.K. Jain, about the prime minister's involvement in it. The CBI spokesman, told newsperson in New Delhi that since the statement had no evidence value in itself, it does not form part of the charge-sheet filed in any of the cases so far. He added that Mr. Jain was interrogated several times since 1993. His statements were recorded whenever he was interrogated and they are very much part of the case report. This is well within the knowledge of the competent court. The CBI said that the records connected with the case under investigation can be obtained only by the persons concerned from the court as per law.

As already reported, the prime minister has denied the allegation of his involvement in the hawala case. He has described as totally baseless the charges made by the leader of the opposition Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in New Delhi yesterday. The official spokesman, who has been authorized by the prime minister said: Mr. Narasimha Rao has not received any money from Mr. S.K. Jain, nor had he authorized anyone else to receive money on his behalf. The spokesman also denied the statement attributed to Jain regarding the circumstances of his meeting with Mr. Rao. According to the spokesman, the question whether Jain ever met Mr. Rao may require verification.

Indian Congress Tewari Leader Interviewed on CBI Investigation

BK2401122896 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 21 Jan 96 p 9

["Exclusive" interview with Tewari Congress President Arjun Singh by Navin Upadhyay in Patna; date not given — first paragraph is THE PIONEER introduction]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Working president of the breakaway Congress (Tewari) Arjun Singh says he believes the three Congress Union Ministers have been implicated in the multi-crore Jain hawala [illegal money laundering] case. Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao has got them framed for his personal survival, says Singh in an exclusive interview with Navin Upadhyay in Patna.

[Upadhyay] Do you think the Prime Minister is personally corrupt?

[Singh] (Thoughtfully) Rao is running away from Parliament and the Press and trying to avoid answering corruption related issues. It does not speak well of the Prime Minister and he must come forward and take the people into confidence. Running away will not help.

[Upadhyay] Why have you asked for sealing all papers and evidence in the case?

[Singh] I am not making any allegations against the investigating agency but such a step would certainly dispel the doubts and fears of possible manipulation and tampering with documents.

[Upadhyay] What is your reaction to Sharad Yadav's admission of accepting Rs [rupees] 3 lakh for election funding?

[Singh] It is a matter of individual discretion whether to accept money even for election funding from such sources. I agree the background of donors should be considered before accepting any fund for electioneering.

[Upadhyay] Have you accepted any money from the Jain brothers?

[Singh] I have not taken any hawala money. The trial will vindicate my stand. I have all along co-operated with the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] during the probe and would expect the trial to be speeded up so that a clear picture emerges before the election. I'm neither defending nor accusing anyone whose name has been mentioned in the diary but would like to ask if framing anyone on the basis of such flimsy evidence is justified.

[Upadhyay] Can Rao and the Congress reap any benefit from the episode?

[Singh] By the time elections are held, things will have become much more clearer. But I do not think the Congress can exploit the situation.

Implications of Indian Money Scandal Viewed

BK2301134896 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 18 Jan 96 p 1

["Page One Comment" by V.N. Narayanan: "Countdown to Chaos"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Just when the nation is wondering about its choicelessness on the eve of a general election, it has been rudely shocked into a realization

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of the enormity of its choicelessness. On the question of honesty and integrity, the Indian political system has stopped inspiring hope in the minds of the people. The hesitant, belated and, suspiciously selective, revelations of the Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] against political leaders, governors and ministers, past and present, are bound to further erode public confidence in the political system.

Since the CBI is for all practical purposes the handmaid of the government in general and the prime minister in particular, political motive is writ large in the exercise. One would detect some sins of omission and commission. If observers who have been following the hawala [illegal money transfer] scandal case for the last two-and-a-half years find that quite a few prominent recipients of illegal payments do not find mention in the CBI's roll call of dishonor, millions of people all over this country would refuse to believe that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr L. K. Advani, or the union HRD [human resources development] minister, Mr Madhavrao Scindia, could ever do what they have been accused of doing. There may be others with proven record of clean public life being tarred with the same brush.

The Supreme Court, which had held proceedings in camera, would have served the ends of natural justice better if it had heard the versions of those against whom the CBI wanted to institute cases. After all, whatever the CBI had as evidence must have been with it for at least two years. If it had waited all this time it would not be contributing to any delay in justice if the intended accused were allowed adequate time to clear their names and image both legally and before the people. This is all the more necessary because the list of the accused contains the names of leaders who are seen as potential prime ministers and shapers of the country's future. Mr L.K. Advani lost no time in expressing his outrage by giving up his Lok Sabha seat. Mr Arjun Singh expressed his confidence to legally explode the charges and vindicate himself. It was given to Mr Madhavrao Scindia who resigned on moral grounds from this very government a couple of years ago and returned to it on the strength of that very morality, to face the problem of not being able to quit on moral grounds on this issue. He has termed the charge against him as "contemptible". But the Supreme Court order has made it impossible for the three ministers — Mr Scindia, Mr Balram Jakhar and Mr V.C. Shukla — to stay in office.

It is difficult to divine the motives of the Prime Minister without whose green signal the CBI would not have taken the step of seeking to prosecute its own serving ministers in addition to senior political leaders who had held such high offices as deputy prime minister, union finance minister. Whatever else the motive could be, it cannot be a crusade against corruption. Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao's established unwillingness to act against the corrupt in his own government is too well known for the people to accept the CBI's action as a sudden attack of governmental rectitude. More plausible is that the Prime Minister found in the hawala scandal an opportunity to say that it is not the Congress alone which specializes in political corruption. Other parties and leaders could be guilty, even if not in the same measure.

When the Greek goddess Pandora opened her mythical jar to let out all evils into the world, she closed the lid as Hope was trying to escape. It is now left to the Supreme Court to generate hope that the guilty will be swiftly punished and, what is more important, those with an untainted record of public life and political career are enabled to vindicate their honor even more swiftly. As for the fallout of the scandal itself, it can be said that the Indian polity is watching the countdown to chaos.

Political Implications of Indian CBI Charges Viewed

BK2401121396 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 21 Jan 96 p 9

[Report by Binoo K. John, Ajaz Ashraf, and Vrinda Gopinath]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For a Prime Minister who throughout his five-year tenure was accused of not taking decisions, the last few months have seen a flurry of them, most of them cutting rivals down to size. Nothing however prepared his party or the country for the bombshell that PV Narasimha Rao dropped on Monday. The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] had charge sheeted three of the senior most ministers of his Cabinet apart from scores of others under the Prevention of Corruption Act for allegedly accepting payments from hawala [illegal money laundering] dealers. While leading political parties and senior leaders groped in the dark, Rao casually dismissed questions about the charge sheet saying "the law will take its own course." But what course will the country's politics take?

It was a decision that Narasimha Rao could have avoided taking. Some feel there were many ways in which he could have prevented a charge sheet against his senior party members on the eve of a general election, even though the Supreme Court was pressing for fast movement on the hawala case. Corruption in India was always rhetoric. All the Prime Ministers who talked about corruption translated it into votes but never dared translate it into chargesheets.

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As Delhi shook itself out of the France there were very few answers. Nobody could understand why Prime Minister Narasimha Rao had to allow the CBI to destabilise his own party and Government. Based on the views expressed by a confused cross section of political leaders and back-room boys these are the possible reasons why Rao took such the giant daring step:

* To set the agenda. By moving against his own Ministers he has managed to put across a sense of sincerity and honesty never before shown by any leader, in any party. Such an incredible audacious step will send his popularity soaring irrespective of his Government's long record of screw-ups and scams.

* To cut the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to size using his ministers as cover. Once L.K Advani is laid low, the bite goes out of the BJP campaign.

* To seize the initiative. To present himself as a man with a mission, an image he never really succeeded in selling in spite of the liberalisation and five years of seemingly stable government. What better time that three months before the elections?

* To scuttle moves to bring back Arjun Singh, Tiwari and to keep away Sonia Gandhi for ever. Rajiv Gandhi's name is in the list of recipients of hawala money.

* To show who is boss. After five years as Prime Minister he was still not feared in his party.

* To show ruthlessness and daring, signs admired by any electorate. Nobody can now talk of the politician-criminal nexus without referring to Rao's move.

When a Prime Minister undertakes such a demolition job the fallout is bound to be wide-reaching. It could set off forces which he also might not be able to grapple with. As a shell-shocked V.C. Shukla, Madhavrao Scindia and Balram Jakhar try to come to terms with their status as tainted men charge sheeted by the CBI, the Congress party looks helplessly towards the Prime Minister for his next move. The man whose next move is watched so keenly has already won half the battle. But there are problems galore for the Prime Minister:

* A rebellion within the Congress on election eve. Rumblings of dissent can start from a state like Madhya Pradesh, to which Shukla and Scindia belong.

* Who will Rao turn to? He never had a ring of advisers, often misleading many leaders into believing that he heeded their counsel. (Shukla is a classic example) But on the election campaign a lone man can be a helpless man. Campaign could misfire without back-up support.

* Parties like the BJP will pile on corruption allegations against Rao like. they have already begun. This could blunt his anti-corruption image.

The one question most politicians can't answer is to what extent Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao exploited the Supreme Court's directives to the CBI to his advantage. Did Rao ask the CBI to hound his political rivals, or did he have no option in the issue? Most leaders feel it was a combination of both, and Rao, as is his wont, decided to intervene and derive political mileage out of a scam that, for once, cuts across all political divides.

There is little doubt the CBI was going slow on the investigations in the hawala scam which surfaced way back in 1991. The CBI did nothing until a public interest litigation filed in March 1993 by journalists Rajinder Puri and Vinit Narain forced the Supreme Court to intervene, and issued orders to hasten the probe. It took the CBI all of two years to charge sheet bureaucrats named in the diary while keeping the political bigwigs out of its net. But the Supreme Court judges were not terribly pleased and ordered the CBI to catch the "big fish."

Under persistent pressure, the CBI arrested SK Jain and J.K Jain in March 1995 and conducted raids on the houses of businessman Lalit Suri (he is alleged to have passed on the payoffs to Rajiv Gandhi) and former Janata Dal Minister Arif Mohammed Khan in August. Simultaneously, the CBI continued its investigations against the other recipients of the pay-offs.

Considering the Supreme Court's activist role in the case, Rao could not have stalled the investigation. Says Congress Seva Dal leader Harish Rawat, "Any intervention from the Prime Minister would have led the Supreme Court to accuse the Government of sheltering the guilty. This would have been suicidal for Rao and the Congress."

Does this mean Rao was a mute bystander? Obviously not, most claim. Sources say CBI chief Vijay Rama Rao presented the list and evidence of politicians who had links with the Jains. It was at this point that Rao intervened. He gave the nod to prosecute 10 out of a list of 18 names. The question is why were these names chosen? Could Rao have saved his Ministers, especially his hatchet man V.C Shukla?

Shukla is not the only one. Only a couple of days before the CBI sought permission to chargesheet the Congress Ministers, Madhavrao Scindia was heard praising the Prime Minister at an exclusive dinner party, claiming only Rao could lead the Congress to a win at the hustings. Despite his loyalty to the high command, Scindia was often perceived as a possible consensus candidate for the top post in the eventuality of a hung Parliament. Rao has very smoothly struck off a potential rival.

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Balram Jakhar's ouster can be easily explained: he had been host to dissidents in the party and was involved in unity efforts between the Congress and the breakaway group. But what befuddles Congressmen is the inclusion of Shukla's name in the hit list. Says a Congress Working Committee (CWC) member, "It is easy to see why Scindia's and Jakhar's names are there but I and others cannot figure out why Shukla's head rolled."

Others feel it was the credibility factor for which Shukla was sacrificed. Rao tried to convey the message that there was no witch-hunt on Opposition leaders and that he was willing to purge his own party. "He can counter the BJP's accusation of political vendetta by claiming he has spared no one including his own trusted Minister. And in an election year, the party's image is most important," says a Congress leader.

What advantage does Rao hope to gain from the hawala scam in this crucial election year? In one deft stroke, he has taken the sting out of the corruption plank which topped every Opposition parties' election agenda. In the last five years, corruption scandals and scams have dogged the party and the Opposition, especially the BJP, clearly intended to launch a concerted attack against Rao. Now, that many Opposition leaders have also been tainted in the scam, the weapon has lost most of its edge.

Says Rawat, "In an election year, the Opposition is always looking to accuse the party in power of corruption and scams but this time the Opposition has lost the high moral ground. In fact the advantage is with the Congress as the BJP president is accused of taking money while our leader is perceived as trying to clean the system."

The BJP feels the charges against Advani may not stick but the impact of it could be severe because the party can no longer boast of being above board. The hawala controversy has come on the heels of the Gujarat fiasco and the Enron imbroglio and therefore it will be difficult for the BJP to convince the people of its innocence. The fact the BJP leadership is visibly shaken was seen at their belated attack at Rao when they alleged at a Rs [rupees] 3 crore pay-off to him by the Jains. That it is cornered is also seen by its confused response over Delhi Chief Minister Madan lal Khurana's and BJP leader Yashwant Sinha's offer to resign.

The confusion in the BJP is heightened by the unequivocal stands taken by other political leaders associated with the hawala scam. For instance, Janata Dal leader Sharad Yadav reiterated his claim that he had accepted Rs 3 lakh as donation to his party. Ditto Rajesh Pilot. And Union Minister Kamal Nath rushed to his constituency as soon as the names of those charge sheeted were made public to ask his people what should he do if his name was to surface. In contrast, the BJP's response has been essentially defensive.

Counters lawyer Arun Jaitley, a BJP insider: "We are going to fight it politically not legally because we are confident Advani will be exonerated... we as a country is still grappling in the absence of a legitimate funding process."

Jaitley's assertion apart, Rao's gambit has cleared the way for a possible working relationship between the Prime Minister and a section of the BJP led by Atal Behari Vajpayee and Murli Manohar Joshi. Advani has admitted of a "close" relationship between the two and that but for his intervention the late RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh] leader Bhaurao Deoras might have enforced a pact between the Congress and the BJP. In the event of a hung Parliament, which is a distinct possibility, and to some extent with Advani neutralised, the situation could be conducive for Rao and Vajpayee to come to a post-poll pact.

Besides preempting the BJP's plan of exploiting the corruption issue, Rao hopes to go one step further by trying to portray himself as "Mr Clean," a person who is trying to clean up the party of "dubious elements." By attacking Arjun Singh, he has effectively stalled unity attempts and is in no mood to tolerate pretenders. The message has gone down loud and clear: He is his own boss.

At the moment, the advantage rests with Rao, but as a senior CWC member cautions: "This could well be a double-edged sword and it could also boomerang on the Congress." First, there is tremendous apprehension that a new list could nail more Congressmen and further weaken the party. Two, the Capital is agog with the news, which has been subsequently articulated by the BJP, that the Jains had in a taped confession made a payment of Rs 3 crore to the Prime Minister through Chandraswami. The CWC leader believes the Supreme Court could ask the CBI to probe the charge. Three, with the possibility of more Congress leaders being chargesheeted, there is a slim chance of a regrouping of dissidents.

There is much talk about Rao facing the election with a whole new team of fresh faces. This, they say, is the only explanation for Rao to have come out against the top leadership from Madhya Pradesh, a State where the Congress is on a good wicket. Rao apparently wants to project a new and refurbished image of the party and kick off the campaign on a new note.

As the Congress and the country comes to terms with Rao's daring gamble it is quite clear that an unseen face of the Prime Minister is becoming visible just before

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the election. It is a transformed Prime Minister with a "new" Congress and a "new" agenda that is going to battle. The CBI charge sheet is only the beginning of the process.

Manohar Joshi for Early Resumption of Enron Project in India

BK2401110296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Maharashtra chief minister, Mr. Manohar Joshi, has said that instructions will be issued to the state energy department to clear the 2,184-megawatt Dabhol power project for early resumption of work. He was talking to newsmen in Mumbai [Bombay] today after meeting with the Enron chief, Mrs. Rebecca Mark. Mrs. Mark also met the deputy chief minister, Mr. Gopinath Munde, later.

Iran

U.S. Accused of Counterfeiting Iranian Currency

LD2401095896 Tehran IRNA in English 0918 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, United Nations HQ., Jan. 24, IRNA — Iran's permanent mission to the U.N. once again refuted an old U.S. allegation that Tehran printed counterfeit U.S. dollars, saying that Washington itself was involved in "making phony Iranian bills."

In a press release here Tuesday that termed the charge as "unfounded", the Iranian mission dismissed the allegation of ABC TV network in its evening news, which reported Monday that "Iran prints and distributes counterfeit 100 U.S. dollar bills."

It noted the U.S. claim "dates as far back as July 1992, and subsequently rejected by Iran in the strongest possible terms."

"The Islamic Republic of Iran expresses outrage at the absurd allegation that it minted U.S. dollars in 1992, and hereby categorically denies the ABC news report of yesterday, which, like its precedent in 1992, presented absolutely no evidence or document (to support the claim)," argued Iran in its press release.

It stressed the absurdity of the allegation would become more evident when "it is considered that Iran is itself affected by the circulation of counterfeit 10,000 rial bills."

It underscored the fact that the U.S. Administration "has embarked on a program to undermine the political system in Iran and has the expressed incentive as well as the required technology and expertise to destabilize the iranian economy through direct and/or indirect involvement in making phony Iranian bills."

Tehran Radio Cites Bahraini Interior Ministry on Unrest, Arson Attacks

NC2401065696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bahraini Interior Ministry has issued a statement saying that during the past two days there were at least 15 arson attacks and several attacks on private property in various parts of that country. The statement adds that during the recent unrest, several power generators and several commercial establishments were set on fire.

The Bahraini Interior Ministry says that the perpetrators of the unrest have been arrested.

Bahrain has been a scene of unrest since last week.

Iran: 'Propaganda' on Bahrain Crisis Undermines Gulf Security

LD2301141596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1107 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the wake of the escalation of unrest in Bahrain and the increase in antigovernment demonstrations, that country's army has announced that if the situation continues, it will declare martial law. This threat has come at a time when, during the past year, military forces have been involved, alongside security forces, in trying to confront the antigovernment forces and quell the unrest.

The unrest in Bahrain began last Azar [month beginning 22 November] with the arrest of Shaykh 'Ali Salman, one of that country's Shiite clergymen. He was accused of carrying out activities toward the reopening of Bahrain's parliament and collecting signatures in an effort to gain the support of other people of influence in Bahrain. The arrest and deportation of Shaykh 'Ali Salman became the prelude for a process which — over the last year [as heard] — has not only not subsided but has intensified, despite the arrest and imprisonment of its leaders, to such a point that the army has threatened to declare martial law.

In recent days, with the arrest of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, another of Bahrain's Shiite leaders, the unrest in that country has escalated. Despite the propaganda that tries to present foreign factors as the cause of the domestic unrest in Bahrain, analysts consider this

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unrest to be a result of disregard for Islamic concerns, political divisions in Bahrain, and the absence of a mechanism allowing the participation of opposition groups in power. [passage omitted]

In view of the domestic causes of the crisis in Bahrain, it seems as if the propaganda spokesmen who attribute it to foreign factors are trying to exploit the situation in Bahrain to their own advantage. Indulging in this propaganda not only does not assist in reducing the unrest in Bahrain, but also results in overlooking its real cause and in further complicating the situation; this is neither to the benefit of Bahrain nor to the benefit of the security and stability of the Persian Gulf region.

Tehran Radio Views Syrian-Israeli Talks in Maryland

NC2401111496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 24 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] A fresh round of talks between experts from the Zionist regime and Syria is to start in Maryland, near Washington, today. During these talks, economic and military experts will attempt to find common points for solving joint differences.

Since major topics like the delineation of the final border between Syria and the Zionist regime have not yet been discussed or examined, America and Israel are concerned that the talks will become lengthy; and, in view of the elections that are to take place in both countries, the two are trying to force Syria to give in to a compromise with the Zionist regime as soon as possible. However, for Syria, regaining the areas that it lost in the 1967 war is critical, and it does not seem that Syria intends to agree to sign a compromise deal with the Zionist regime before these territories are regained.

Syria's disagreement on elevating the level of talks with the Zionist regime—something which Christopher tried to make Damascus agree to during his recent visit to the region—stemmed from this same difference between the two sides. The Zionist regime is trying—by elevating the level of the talks—to rapidly pass through the various phases. However, Syria is moving cautiously and trying to avoid bringing its high-ranking officials into the talks until after it regains its lost rights.

It is in view of this situation that, on the eve of the commencement of the Maryland talks, Zionist officials have stated that they are concerned that these talks will become lengthy. Zionist Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said: We need high-level talks in order to achieve progress and so we should raise the talks to a higher level, otherwise they will become lengthy.

The disagreement between Syria and the Zionist regime over the Golan Heights and the arrangements to be introduced after the compromise deal constitute the dominant problem in the Damascus-Tel Aviv talks. The Golan Heights were occupied by the Zionist regime in the 1967 war. And even though the United Nations has confirmed that these areas were occupied and demanded that Israel withdraw, the Zionist regime has not shown any willingness to do so.

Even though Israel is participating in the talks now, every time the issue of leaving Golan is brought up, it prevents the withdrawal of Zionist forces by propounding preconditions such as the establishment of rapid warning systems, decreasing the number of Syrian forces, and receiving guarantees from Syria on refraining from any type of operation.

Syria considers compliance with the Zionist regime's preconditions as a violation of its sovereignty, and continuation of the occupation through other means, and refuses to accept them. Damascus demands the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Israel from Golan. And despite all U.S. efforts, Syria continues to insist on its stands. Therefore, it seems that despite all the propaganda on the resolution of problems between Syria and the Zionist regime, Syria continues to have many doubts about compromise; and there is a long road ahead in overcoming these doubts.

Iran: Baghdad Failing To Observe Commitments on Body Exchanges

LD2001125296 Tehran IRNA in English 1036 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 20, IRNA — Head of the general staff of the Armed Forces' committee for tracing those missing in action, Mir-Faysal Baqerzadeh, said here Saturday [20 January] that Baghdad does not abide by its commitments on exchange of the bodies remaining from the period of the Iraqi imposed war, evading the exchange under several pretexts.

Underlining Iran's readiness for the full implementation of the agreements reached by the Iranian and Iraqi officials, he said that, based on the agreements, swapping of the bodies was decided to be carried out periodically at two border regions of Khosravi and Shalamcheh.

Following the Tehran agreement, he added, such an exchange has taken place only once at Khosravi border region.

Baqerzadeh added that the two countries' officials also agreed in Tehran on exchange of information,

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dispatching guides to the two countries' operational zones, and continuation of search for the bodies, none of which has been conducted due to obstacles created by Iraq. He categorically denied allegations by some Iraqi officials that Iran is politically exploiting the matter, noting that bringing up such allegations by the Iraqi officials is itself prompted by political motives.

The Iranian official further said that, if the Iraqi officials are set for the exchange of the bodies, instead of accusing Iran, they had better fix a date for the exchange at Shalamcheh region.

Baqerzadeh stressed that keeping the Iraqi corpses at Khosravi and Shalamcheh border points is problematic due to attacks by wild and hungry animals.

Iranian Offshore Banking To Be Established in Sirjan

LD2101113796 Tehran IRNA in English 0903 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Governor of Iran's Central Bank, Mohsen Nurbakhsh, has ordered establishment of the first off-shore banking branch in Sirjan in order to guarantee the capital of foreigners interested in investing in the Sirjan Special Economic Zone (SSEZ), reported the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' on Sunday.

The paper quoting Mehdi Sharafoddini, advisor to the managing director of Kerman Development Organization, added that without any connection with the domestic banking system, the off-shore branch is linked to the international banking network. Customers can transfer money to any country desired, and the foreign investors are able to deposit or withdraw their money through international banking network, Sharafoddini further said. He added that up to 35 percent of the SSEZ industrial projects have been handed over to foreign companies, and that the ssez has ample capacity for investment by Iranians and foreigners.

Sirjan connects five Iranian provinces, Khorasan, Sistan-Baluchestan, Hormuzgan, Yazd and Fars. Exported and imported shipments pass through Sirjan, which acts as an intersection linking routes from Central Asia to those leading to the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, the daily added.

Joint Border Market Opened by Iran, Azerbaijan

LD2101120896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first joint-market by Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan was opened in Bilasuvar in Moghan. Here is our correspondent with a report on that:

[Unidentified correspondent] The market has been set up in 100,000 square meters and has 15 pavilions, installations, and peripheral equipment at a cost of 300 million rials.

Goods imported and released in this market will be registered statistically and registration of goods has been eliminated.

Total value of annual goods at the market has been forecast as $10 million. 200 to 250 local traders will be working at the market in three-monthly stints.

At the opening of the Bilasuvar border market, attended by the Azeri Foreign Economic Relations Minister, Iran's ambassador to Azerbaijan, and officials from the two countries, the governor- general of Ardebil declared Iran's willingness to forge sincere relations with its neighboring countries.

The Azeri Foreign Economic Relations Minister expressed his government's satisfaction over the opening of the market and stressed the expansion of ties between the two countries.

Central News Unit, Ardebil.

Habibi: Presence of 'Aliens' in Balkans To 'Foment Unrest'

LD2101171696 Tehran IRNA in English 1548 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — First vice-president, Hasan Habibi, said here on Sunday [21 January] the presence of the aliens in the Balkans would foment unrest in the region.

In a meeting with the outgoing Croatian ambassador, Osman Muftic, Habibi said, "our friends in the Balkans should exercise full vigilance and behave in a such a way that those who are against peace cannot foment tension and unrest in the region."

Habibi emphasized the importance of honouring the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the significance of developing ties between Tehran and Zagreb.

All those who are interested in real peace in the world, should think of peace in the Balkans, the Iranian vice-president said.

Muftic appreciated Iran's humanitarian efforts to help resolve the crisis in the Balkans and described Iranian initiative to form trialteral cooperation among Iran, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina as constructive. He

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said Croatia attaches importance to its relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: 'Western' Institutions' Role in Islamic Country Questioned

NC2201093096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 11 Jan 96 p 3

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Unidentified caller] His Eminence Ayatollah Yazdi, esteemed head of the judiciary, has very clearly recited the death prayer both for the people's votes and for the people's rule. I think that he is extremely honest and has clearly expressed and explained his personal beliefs to the public. We thank him very much for this. But what is a riddle to me is: What use is the Constitution, the Majles, the Council of Experts, the Expediency Council, and all the other councils and organs and why do they put forth candidates and ask the people to participate in the elections? What is the reason for such double standards?

[SALAM] Although Ayatollah Yazdi will definitely reject this assessment of his remarks, the truth is that one of the impacts and outcomes of rule from above is that the people only have a duty to accept and obey, and whatever is referred to as the right to vote, the right to choose, and the right to determine one's fate are things that have been loaned to them and may be taken away at any moment. At the outset of the revolution, the Libyan ambassador to Iran (Sa'd Mujabbir) asked the deputy speaker in the First Majles: What are all these things that you have started? We do not have a legislative assembly in Islam. We have succession in Islam and the serving of the successor or caliph of the Muslims. No one has the right to engage in legislation. The system that you have formed is a Western system!

Nevertheless, we should all recall the very correct words: "It is the votes of the nation that count." [passage omitted]

Majles Deputy Sadra: Iran Opposes Any Concessions To Israel

LD2201103096 Tehran IRNA in English 0804 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — The Zionist regime is the only source of tension and insecurity in the strategic Middle East region, a member of the Majlis foreign policy committee, 'Ali Reza Sadra, said, urging regional countries to beware of plots and conspiracies hatched by the Zionist enemy.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' on Monday, he elaborated on the Majlis foreign policy committee's stance toward the so-called Middle East peace process and said, "Iran basically disagrees with any concessions given to the Zionist regime as granting such concessions will not be in the interest of regional countries, and especially not for the Palestinians."

Regarding Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations, Sadra stated that these discussions do not undermine Iran-Syria relations and the two nations will preserve their friendly ties in the future as they did in the past. He also highlighted Iran's mediation efforts in several regional states and referred to the recent visit of an Iranian delegation to Iraqi Kurdistan to mediate between various Kurdish factions.

Tehran is determined to help these countries to bring about unity, territorial integrity and congruity in the region. However, "Iran's mediation in Iraqi kurdistan led the U.S. to express its dissatisfaction and opposition, but the U.S. should know that, despite the obstacles created by the U.S. in this regard, Iran spares no effort to bring about peace among different groups," TEHRAN TIMES quoted Sadra as saying.

He concluded by emphasizing that the key to Iran's further success and prosperity is the active participation of people in all political, cultural and economic arenas, adding that the people can decide the fate of their country by taking part in parliamentary elections.

Foreign Minister Velayati Congratulates Russia's Primakov

LD2301142896 Tehran IRNA in English 1316 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — Foreign Ministers of Iran and Russia in a telephone conversation on Tuesday [23 January] exchanged views on Tehran-Moscow relations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati offered his congratulation to Yevgeniy Primakov of Russia on his appointment as the Russian foreign minister and hoped that after the recent developments in Russia, the Russian Government would work to deepen relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two foreign ministers also called for development of regional cooperation.

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Afghan Envoy Welcomes Iranian Mediation in Pakistani Negotiations

LD2301161296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The charge d'affaires of the Afghan Embassy in Tehran, Mr. Khorasani, has welcomed Iran's mediating efforts. In an interview with a correspondent of Iranian radio and television's external services he said this morning: We express gratitude for the continued and indefatigable efforts of the ministry of foreign affairs of Iran.

He added: We do not want tension with any of our neighbors in an unequal political atmosphere [as heard], and the government of Afghanistan has always wanted and wants to have friendly and cordial relations with all neighbors including Pakistan.

With regard to the Afghan president's proposal on the occasion of the month of Ramadan concerning ending fighting in Afghanistan, he said: In view of the existing public pressure in Afghanistan, no-one wants war in Afghanistan. The only group that wants fighting is the Taleban, who have never kept their promises.

Rafsanjani Congratulates Islamic States on Ramadan

LD2101133996 Tehran IRNA in English 1304 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — On the eve of the fasting month of Ramadan, President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Sunday [21 January] offered his felicitation to the heads of Islamic states and Muslim nations of the world on the auspicious event. Hojjat ol- Eslam Rafsanjani said in his message that the holy month of Ramadhan is a month in which the Holy Quran was descended to Muslims.

The president hoped that in the holy month of Ramadhan, the month of divine reception, would be the occasion for dignity and honour of Islam and the Muslims throughout the world as well as unity of the Islamic nations.

Visiting Armenian Cleric Holds Talks With Rafsanjani

LD2101152196 Tehran IRNA in English 1456 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Visiting religious leader of Armenian Cilicia Center based in Lebanon Aram I Catholicos Kashishian on Sunday admitted that Iranian Armenian minority is freely practicing their religious rituals in Iran.

"I have become familiar with the free practice of religious rituals by Iranian Armenians," he told president Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani in a meeting here Sunday. He also dismissed hostile propaganda spread by enemies of the Islamic Republic and so called human rights organizations alleging that the rights of religious minorities are ignored in Iran.

Kashishian thanked the Islamic Republic on behalf of all Armenians of Iran and the world for providing free atmosphere for the minorities to practice their religious rituals.

The Armenian leader said that during his ten day stay in Iran, he met with Armenian people in Tehran, Esfahan, Tabriz and Orumiyeh and observed their free practice of reliigous ceremonies.

He also praised the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the president and officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their good treatment of Armenians in Iran.

President Rafsanjani said Islam which is the religion of mercy holds other divine religions in high esteem.

Habibi, Italian Envoy Discuss Iran-EU Cooperation

LD2101202296 Tehran IRNA in English 1939 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — In a meeting here today with First Vice-President Hasan Habibi, the Italian Ambassador to Iran Ludovico Ortona said that his country, which is the current chairman of the European Union (EU), will spare no efforts in boosting cooperation between Iran and European states.

Underlining the need for making a close study of Iran, the Italian ambassador also expressed hope that it will pave the way for a proper understanding of Iranian issues.

Habibi in reply, referred to the historic relations between Iran and Italy and called the potentials of the two sides as a source for further expansion of relations between Tehran and Rome.

He also stated that Iran is interested in expanding its relations with European countries and has the political will for upgrading cultural, economic, political and diplomatic cooperation with Italy.

Once the Mashhad-Sarakhs railway starts operation, Italy and other European countries could increase multilateral trade cooperation with the Central Asian republics via Iran, making the route a project of peace, friendship and security, said Habibi.

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At the end of the meeting the Iranian first vice-president called for Tehran-Rome cooperation in the areas of culture, exchange of university students, research activities, architecture, and industries.

Iranian-Turkmen Communique Urges Meeting on Caspian

LD2301205796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Saparmurad Niyazov of Turkmenistan today ended his visit to our country and left Tehran. [passage omitted]

At the end of the official visit of Turkmenistan's president, a joint press communique was issued. The communique emphasized that valuable and important steps had been taken to increase and strengthen relations between the two countries more than before; to cooperate in finding peaceful solutions to the existing crisis in the region, including the crises in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Karabakh.

In this communique the two sides also expressed concern over the unilateral and uncontrolled exploitation of the Caspian Sea, stressing the establishment of a legal regime based on the joint exploitation of the sea by all the countries bordering it. The communique calls for a meeting of the foreign ministers of these countries and the adoption of necessary decisions to protect the environment of this unique sea.

'Cultural Onslaught' Satellite Dishes Banned in Iran

LD2301141696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1230 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text]In order to combat the cultural onslaught, a special judicial complex, by the name of the Martyr Qoddusi Complex, has been established in Tehran. According to the deputy head of the justice department of Tehran Province, cases relating to the cultural onslaught will be investigated at this complex. He said: According to the law, having satellite dishes, whether they are being used or not, is banned and considered to be an offense.

The head of the Martyr Qoddusi Complex [title as heard] added: All the agents who are sent to inspect houses must carry identity cards and warrants from the judiciary.

He said: Two thousand obscene diskettes have been discovered and seized from a computer services company which was distributing obscene diskettes under the cover of distributing educational diskettes for students. In addition to this, a gang distributing offensive video cassettes, which was operating on an extensive level, has been identified and 88 people arrested in this connection.

Trial Begins of 'Red Ruby' Criminal Gang in Iran

LD2101142996 Tehran IRNA in English 1358 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Trial of eight members of a gang of criminals known as 'the red ruby' started here this morning. Members of the gang are accused of armed robbery and murder. The court was presided over by Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Razini, head of Tehran's justice department.

The group is also charged with robbing 10 jewellery shops and killing five of the shop owners. Members of the band are also involved in the killing two law enforcement personnel while breaking into jewellery shops.

The ringleader of the band, [is] Nemat Valad-Beyguy, 32, who first robbed a jewellery shop in Tehran's bazaar in 1990. Upon his release from prison a year later, [he] shot dead a friend with a pistol. The criminal, who has so far killed five owners of jewellery shops was hunted down in April last year as he was meeting a friend at a park. Four of the 12-member band are still at large. however, efforts are underway to hunt down the fugitive culprits.

Iranian Army Self-Sufficient in Manufacturing Arms

LD2201143196 Tehran IRNA in English 1202 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Urumiyeh, West Azarbaijan Prov,. Jan. 22, IRNA — The Iranian army has become self-sufficient in manufacturing their required weapons, the army commander has said.

Brigadier General Ahmad Dadbin speaking at a gathering of army commanders and some provincial officials here said that tanks as the most advanced weapons used by ground forces are now produced inside the country.

He added that before the culmination of the Islamic revolution, the army was not allowed to even repair a weapon but it is now in such a position that can produce its required weaponry.

According to the commander, Iranian armed forces now enjoyed most sophisticated arms.

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Iran's Majles Approves 137 Trillion Rial Budget

LD2301200196 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A short time ago the Majles deputies approved the country's Budget Bill for the year 1375 [beginning 21 March 1996].

According to a Central News Unit report, in accordance with the Majles approval, the country's budget for that year, in terms of revenues and other sources of income and expenses and other payments, amounts to 137,144,647,323,000 rials.

The government's general budget, in terms of revenues and expenses, amounts to 61,033,786,320,000 rials, including general revenues of 55,781,178,592,000 rials and specific revenues of ministries and government organizations of 5,252,607,728,000 rials.

Under the Majles approval the budget for government companies, banks and other profit-making organizations affiliated to the government, in terms of revenues and other sources of income and also expenses, amounts to 89,040,590,694,000 rials.

Under the single-article 1375 Budget Bill, if rial revenues from the sale of oil or foreign currency is more than the amount forecast in the Act, the government is authorized to guarantee and pay out up to 1,857,905 million rials on a monthly basis. [passage omitted]

JRM Official Against Coalition With Other Iranian Parties

LD2101202796 Tehran IRNA in English 1936 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Member of the Central Council of Jame' Rouhaniyat-e-Mobarez (JRM), Hojjat ol-eslam Moezzi said here on Sunday that the election campaign of political groups for the forthcoming parliamentary polls could be interesting both from the domestic and international points of view.

Addressing a group of ulema and missionaries, he said that last week's statement of some government officials failed to appreciate the services rendered by the outgoing Majles, when it was the Majles which approved the second five-year development plan.

According to Moezzi the statement was detrimental to the elections because when ten ministers, four presidential deputies, Tehran's mayor and the governor of the central bank form a political stream and support certain candidates, their views are bound to influence governors and governors general, thereby affecting the trend of voting.

He questioned, "If such an approach spreads to the provinces what would happen? Won't it create serious problem to the elections?"

He said the JRM regarding its religious duty and political courtesy would do its best to help the composition of the fifth Majles be 100 percent in line with the concept of Velayat-e-faqih (rule of the supreme jurist).

Hojjat ol-eslam Moezzi said that global arrogance led by the U.S. is trying to weaken the concept of Velayat-e faqih. He added that the recent sanctioning of dlrs. 20 million by America is not to start armed struggle between groups in Iran or to organize a coup, but to weaken the concept of Velayat-e faqih in the name of "progressive trends".

He said that in his opinion there were not more than two political trends in the country, namely: the line of Velayat-e faqih and those without Velayat-e faqih.

The JRM, said Moezzi, is loyal to the principles of the Islamic revolution outlined by the leader of the Islamic revolution.

He said that since the JRM favours an election campaign involving different political groups, it will not go for coalition with other differing parties.

Moezzi regretted the decision of the majma' Rouhanioun Mobarez (MRM) not to introduce any candidates for the elections.

Paper on Rafsanjani Dispute With JRM on Majles Candidates

LD2301110096 Tehran IRNA in English 0801 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — The English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' Tuesday [23 January] commented on the publication of a declaration by 16 senior government officials regarding the forthcoming Majles elections.

The editorial added that failing to arrive at an agreement with the rest of the Jame'eh-ye Ruhaniyat-e Mobarez [Militant Clergy Association] (JRM) of Tehran President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani has permitted his supporters to begin a fresh election campaign.

"It seems that President Rafsanjani, who is a member of the Central Council of the JRM, could not come to terms with some of the other members over the issue of who should be on the JRM's list of candidates for the next Majles elections."

Since parliamentary elections are relatively new in the country and political party rivalries are even a more

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recent concept because of the dictatorial regimes preceding the Islamic revolution, it should be kept in mind that there are major differences between governmental systems, it noted.

Dictatorial systems destroy their enemies (opposition), while the survival of pluralistic systems are dependent on the existence of their political rivals (opposition), the editorial wrote.

IRAN NEWS further added that in totalitarian regimes, opposition means being an enemy of those you politically oppose, but in politically pluralistic societies where the government draws its strength from the popular vote of its people, opposition means rivalry, not personal enmity.

"Since we consider our system of government to be based on popular support, then all political factions loyal to the system must consider the opposition as political and election rivals rather than personal enemies, and must refrain from character assassination and any other unethical and religiously abhorrent acts concerning their political opponents," it concluded.

New Political Party Formed in Iran

LD2301144096 Tehran IRNA in English 1306 GMT 23 Dec 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jan. 23, IRNA — Majlis Deputy from Tehran Sayyed Rajaie Khorasani said a new party, Hezb-e Esteqlal-e Iran (Iran's independence party) is to be formed after the next Majlis elections, reported Iranian newspapers Tuesday.

In separate interviews with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' and Persian 'AKHBAR', he said, "a political party is essential, but not at this stage as an incentive for the coming elections."

"The need for a political party is a real one in the islamic republic.

"We don't want to use the political party as a mere slogan to attract the voters," he pointed out.

Khorasani further said that studies have been carried out on constitutions of parties of other countries. He, however, added, "what we want is a comprehensive constitution which could suit our needs."

With the motto of 'Whoever is aware is powerful', the party will pay maximum attention to the scientific and research activities for an overall development of the society, the parliamentarian said.

Rajaie Khorasani also said that the party has been named the Hezb-e Esteqlal-e Iran but it may be changed at the time of applying to the ministry of Interior for registration.

In conclusion, he noted that a number of Majlis deputies and intellectuals have voiced willingness to join the party, while some others are still deliberating.

Militant Clerics' Participation in Iranian Elections Ruled Out

NC2301180496 Tehran SALAM in Persian 16 Jan 96 p 3

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] [Majles Speaker] Nateq-Nuri's remarks on issuing a serious call to the Militant Clerics to participate in the elections are encouraging. But doesn't he think that it is too late for this? The Militant Clerics may have some reasons why they do not want to participate; and this is not a problem that can be solved through sweet talk. As one of the heads of the rightist faction, is he ready to make some changes in his own behavior?

[SALAM] There should be no doubts about the esteemed Majles speaker's good intentions. But it is highly improbable that the basis for the decision by the Militant Clerics is such that they will be sweet-talked into changing their decision on the eve of the elections. Various groups—both clerical and non-clerical—who started their campaign months ago are still facing a problem in putting forth a list of candidates. The vast efforts for ensuring the astronomic amounts needed for their campaigns, which they started months ago, are still continuing and we sometimes hear strange rumors about methods that they use to meet these expenses. If these rumors are true, they are astonishing. It is also rumored that some of the supporters of the Militant Clerics have proposed that, since the association does not intend to put forth a list, it should issue a statement and give the public explanations on the major obstacles that prevented them from proposing candidates and thus end the poison being spread by some newspapers and bulletins. But it is reported that the association has preferred to remain silent and to tolerate all the unjust things being said so the elections will be held in as calm an atmosphere as possible. Some members of the Militant Clerics do not rule out the possibility that, within the next weeks and the closer we move toward the elections, propaganda attacks on members of the association will be intensified and they will be a target of a far greater onslaught than in the past. But apparently the association prefers the policy of silence and patience to any other method. [passage omitted]

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Paper Calls For Moves Against Potential Iranian Election Disruptors

LD2001065996 Tehran IRNA in English 0641 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 20, IRNA — The English daily 'Iran News' Saturday [20 January] urged the Interior Ministry and the judiciary to confront those who intend to disrupt healthy elections under the name of the executive branch.

The editorial was commenting on the last week remarks of leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i to governors general of the country saying that truth and justice should take precedence over all other considerations.

"In the past 16 years there have unfortunately been cases where some governors deviated from strictly legal procedures and the impartiality that is expected of them in the conduct of their duties."

Acknowledging that such conducts were done at times with the best of intentions and out of a sense of responsibility, it said, "this is especially deplorable when it is committed by conscientious people because there can never be any justification for the sacrifice of truth and justice at the altar of expediency."

The editorial cautioned that such mistakes inflict the most serious blow to the Islamic Republic.

"Also, the media should help in preserving a healthy election atmosphere by exposing any transgressions from the correct procedures," concluded the daily.

Former Deputy Says Most Iranian Majles Members To Lose Seats

LD2001145796 Tehran IRNA in English 1344 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 20, IRNA — Former Member of Parliament Hojjat ol-Eslam Sadeq Khalkhali said on Saturday [20 January] that the majority of present Majles deputies would lose seats in the next parliamentary elections, slated for March 8.

Speaking to IRNA, Hojjat ol-Eslam Khalkhali said that the present members of parliament have failed to curb the price hikes and the inflation so that they would not be re-elected to Majles. He said that people are faced with economic difficulties such as the high cost of living and that the price rise would have adverse effect on the popular turn-out in the next parliamentary polls.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Khalkhali who has served as the MP in the third term of the Majles said the government should try to remove people's displeasure with its economic plans and prepare the ground for massive participation of people in the elections. He said the present MPs are responsible for the price hike, because they have approved bills without taking into consideration their impacts on social life of people.

On the likelihood of Majma' Ruhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) [Militant Clerics Society] running for the polls, he said, "to my best knowledge, the MRM members will not take part in the elections, but, some members might register as independent candidates." On the chance of the technocrats to enter the Majles, he said they might set forth good ideas, but they could not win votes in the elections.

Deputy: Technocrats Unlikely To Be Elected to New Iranian Majles

LD2001145996 Tehran IRNA in English 1356 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 20, IRNA — The head of Majles commission on health and welfare said here on Saturday [20 January] there is a dim possibility of technocrats being elected to parliament.

Speaking to IRNA, Sheybani said that what the technocrats say might sound attractive but they have proved that in practice they will fail. Sheybani who has served as the MP from Tehran in the every four terms of the Majles, anticipated that the composition of the fifth Majles would be similar to the present one. He said in the meantime that some prominent left wing personalities might enter the next parliament.

Sheybani hoped that the MPs of the fifth parliament would work to protect the interest of the people so that their performance would win the trust of people. He forecast that the forthcoming parliamentary elections would witness massive turnout of voters and added that people are aware of the importance of their presence in different scenes including elections.

Tehran Paper Notes 'Unwillingness' of Some Groups To Propose Candidates

NC2101205096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 10 Jan 96 p 2

[From the "News and Views on the Elections" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the explicit announcement by the Militant Clerics Association that it would not propose candidates for the elections, strong unwillingness to propose candidates can also be seen among those groups sympathetic to that Association. Incoming reports indicate that during its latest session, the Central Council of Tahkim-e Vahdate set four conditions for serious participation. The Islamic Society of Teachers, the Islamic Society of University Scholars,

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and the Islamic Society of Engineers have also not expressed any wish to propose candidates so far.

This report indicates that the Organization of the Islamic Revolution Mojahedin, which has not yet reached a definite decision on serious participation and proposing a candidate, wants some conditions to be met before it proposes its candidates. It is said that one of these conditions is the participation in the elections of the other groups that are sympathetic to it.

Iranian Reader's Views on Not Participating in Elections Scored

NC2101211396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 10 Jan 96 p 3

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Unidentified caller] I would like to say that the officials themselves should not promise that the people, especially the educated strata and university graduates like me who are numerous, will participate in the elections, because despite all the years that we have studied, we are still unemployed, and by not participating in the elections, we will be expressing our protest against the government's policies.

[SALAM] One does not expect a person who is educated and a university graduate to take political issues so lightly. How many university graduates do we have in the country who accept this dear reader's logic? And more important still, since all the unemployed graduates are not in one party, political group, or guild, it is not possible for one or several persons to claim that all the graduates will definitely not participate in the elections as an act of protest. [passage omitted]

Formation of Rightist Coalition for Iranian Election in Doubt

NC2101213096 Tehran SALAM in Persian 11 Jan 96 p 2

[From the "News and Views on the Election" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite the agreements that are said to have been reached between the traditional right (the current majority in the Majles) and the modern right (the faction close to the president) on a coalition to submit a common list of candidates for the elections in Tehran and in some other cities, rumors on the possibility of their having separate lists and the two groups not forming a coalition have recently been heard.

It is said in political circles that some of the ministers and members of the government may announce a common stand today or within the next few days. Those people who may sign the list put forth by the modern right can not state their names or ranks.

The esteemed Majles Speaker Mr. Nateq-Nuri, answering a question by our correspondent on this topic yesterday in the corridors of the Majles, said that the Militant Clergy will meet tonight (last night) and decide on the matter.

Iranian Clerics Reject Election Proposal of 'Traditional Right'

NC2101215196 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Jan 96 p 2

["News and Views on the Elections" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] As we informed you previously, last week the heads of the traditional right began trying to get some members of the Militant Clerics Association to accept the designation "candidate of the Militant Clergy Association." That is why Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri had contacts with Emam Jamarani and Tavassoli, both of whom responded negatively to the proposal.

It is said in political circles that in the context of the above policy, contact was also made with Mr. Mohammad 'Ali Ansari, head of the organization in charge of compiling and publishing the works of the Imam, may his soul be sanctified. However this effort too failed.

Last week one of the members of the Central Committee of the Militant Clergy Association reported on a possible coalition between the Militant Clergy and Militant Clerics. But apparently this was only wishful thinking and not factual news.

Also, one of the Majles deputies who is apparently trying to join the traditional right faction so that the distinction of being the "spokesman" for this faction will immediately spring into the public's mind when his name is mentioned, reported last week—after reports that the members of the Militant Clerics had rejected the proposal—that this proposal was being examined by the members of that very Association!

Iran's Labor House To Talk With Officials on Joint Candidates

LD2201151996 Tehran IRNA in English 1502 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — Secretary- general of Iran's Labor House said here on Monday that the house will hold negotiations with 16 senior officials of the country, who issued a statement last week, on nominating joint candidates for the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Sixteen senior officials

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including ministers and presidential deputies issued a joint statement last Wednesday in relation to the elections, scheduled for March 8.

Speaking to IRNA team monitoring elections developments, 'Ali Reza Mahjub said the negotiations would be held in case the officials offer a list of their own candidates. Otherwise, he added, the house would introduce its independent candidates in Tehran and other constituencies. Mahjub said the Labor House would support the workers who run for the elections.

Mahjub stressed the need for the presence of deputies in Majles from among the labor community, adding that workers now believe that they should have their own deputies in the parliament in order to defend their rights.

As for problems in the labor community, he regretted lack of enough attention to the issue of employment and said although 48 percent of the population of the country are under 18 years old, employment has not been taken up seriously.

He said that in the next three or four years more work-force, equal to the present work-force under the insurance cover, would enter the labor market. Therefore, he stressed, job opportunities should be provided for them.

Yazdi Emphasizes Impartiality of Judiciary in Iranian Elections

LD2201154196 Tehran IRNA in English 1521 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — Head of the Judiciary Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi in a meeting with judicial officials here on Monday emphasized the impartiality of the judiciary in the forthcoming parliamentary election.

He expressed confidence that the elections would be free and fair and that the officials in charge of elections would accurately fulfil their religious, national and historical obligations.

Ayatollah Yazdi recommended judges to reduce the ceiling of fines for below 18-year old offenders to enable those still in custody to pay for their release.

Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami To Participate in Iranian Election

LD2301112196 Tehran IRNA in English 0836 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — The organization of Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami [Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution] will participate in the forthcoming Majles elections, reported the Persian daily 'IRAN' Tuesday [23 January].

Supporting the recent statement of a group of 16 senior government officials regarding the elections and expressing hope that other political and intellectual entities would enter the scene, a member of the organization, Behzad Nabavi, welcomed the emergence of a new group and encouraged officials to continue their initiatives.

Nabavi, a former minister, added that the Mojahedin-e Enqelab-e Eslami has also invited all pro-Islamic Republic political groups and parties to take part in the polls. Presence of more groups will further strengthen the system and prevent domination of one faction in the fifth Majles.

Nabavi stressed that the organization intends to help in promoting an active exchange of ideas in the society and prevent unhealthy confrontations in the Majles.

Tehran Deputy Interviewed on Political Parties, Election

NC2301185396 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 14 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the Tehran deputies in the Majles said: The people should base their votes on steady platforms rather than on opinions and personalities during the elections.

Dr. Sa'id Raja'i-Khorasani, a member of the Majles' Foreign Policy Commission, speaking to ABRAR's parliamentary correspondent, added: Progress can only be achieved if there are different political platforms. Those with similar views will be grouped together and will have a combined voice. The problem of tolerating differing opinions would be solved by forming healthy political organizations.

Commenting on the methods used by candidates to win in the elections, he said: Some candidates usually turn to attractive slogans to gain popularity among the people, while others adhere to the existing ideological factions and use this propaganda method to win votes.

The Tehran deputy added: We are talking about the methods that are used depending on the individual in question. Some spend money and others adhere to political groups or platforms. But none of these are important. The most important issue is how to create an effective and strong Majles that can make decisions about the system's general objectives in a steady and organized manner.

Stressing the need for the formation of parties in the country, Dr. Raja'i-Khorasani said: Political parties are

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absent from our country. What we see are quasiparties, like the majority and minority factions. But there should be political organizations in a parliamentary system that can be transformed into parties when necessary. I believe the formation of parties should be allowed in Iran, since this formation is not legally barred according to the law. Moreover, the current atmosphere in the country is ready to accept parties and party formations. The regulations on the creation of parties must be simplified, and the people must be granted the opportunity to join these parties and support them.

The member of the Majles' Foreign Policy Commission added that the number of parties in a society is a major problem: It is not good to have too many parties in a society. The number should be within a logical framework. Let us not forget that parties are formed to create cohesion, not to disperse people. Therefore, it is extremely favorable and logical to have two to three parties. Too many parties can only create more problems in society.

He said that the most important duty of the parties is to attract and to discover strong, creative, and political forces, and added: The participation of such people in the system will increase a system's capabilities. Outstanding individuals with special characteristics will emerge from a party. This is no threat to society. But if personalities replace objectives, then it can create an unfavorable situation.

The Tehran deputy then referred to some candidates' strenuous efforts to win a seat in the Majles, and said: A deputy in the Islamic Republic's parliamentary system enjoys special respect and receives over 2 million rials in wages and benefits each month, depending on his record, education, and ... [ellipsis as published]. There are other benefits, such as housing, which a deputy also enjoys.

He said that the Majles' policy during the fifth term will depend on the people who constitute it and added: In the next term we will see an increase in the number of educated and expert forces. But this does not mean we will forget commitment [as one of the necessary requirements].

Nuri's Decision To Run in Iranian Elections Discussed

NC2301203196 Tehran SALAM in Persian 15 Jan 96 p 2

[From the "Hello SALAM" column]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Unidentified caller] I think Nuri's inclusion in the Militant Clergy list was a big mistake. How can someone who does not accept the outlook of a specific trend be included in that trend's list of candidates and how can he express common views with it? I think his decision was wrong and somewhat impolite and undignified.

[SALAM] Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Nuri is an outstanding clergyman. He served as long as he could and when some alliances prevented him from continuing his duties, he returned to the seminary in Qom with a pure spirit and left the arena to those who hungered for power. Recently, when he was the target of repeated contacts and demands, he judged everything with his own purity and sincerity and decided that the time was ripe for him to return to the scene. So as not to refuse to undertake responsibilities, he gave in to the demands. But so great were his doubts about whether the situation had changed, he consulted his books and, after reaching a decision, announced his readiness. Then he witnessed a change in the scenery. This is only a small example of the political spirit that rules the elections. [passage omitted]

Iranian Paper Scores 'Propaganda' Efforts by 'Traditional Right'

NC2101212396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 15 Jan 96 p 2

["From the News and Views on the Elections" column]

[FBIS Translated Text] During past [Majles] terms, one of the propaganda ploys used by the traditional right was that as the elections approached, they would resort to various means to get the names of rightist groups and people in the country's news. For this reason, its groups and individuals would give various interviews or publish articles in the press sympathetic to the faction in an effort to indirectly make propaganda for themselves. In order to further spread the traditional right's propaganda and to be able to enter all the homes through radio and television, in addition to the vast means that are usually at its disposal, they would also organize programs to meet with officials so that their names and faces would be repeatedly seen on the television screen.

Those people who are familiar with such methods know that similar meetings should be expected until the Fifth Majles elections are held.

Iranian Daily: Political Parties Surest Way to Democracy

LD2301095896 Tehran IRNA in English 0708 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — A morning daily commenting on the split in the Jame' Rowhaniyat Mobarez (JRM) of Tehran, said that these

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recent developments stemmed from the absence of political parties.

The English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES', in its editorial Tuesday, wrote that it is understood the major existing groups cannot form parties before the next Majles elections.

It underscored however that political parties are the surest way to democracy, stressing that prudence demands that political parties be formed as soon as possible in order to consolidate the groups and increase their accountability to the nation.

"If the major Islamic groupings do not form political parties, there will be further defections," the article noted, adding that, "in the absence of political parties, such groupings will mushroom, endangering the whole political system."

In fact, those who broke away from JRM are as responsible for the current policies as are the JRM Majles members, and the differences between the two groups are not on any policy line, but rather on the nomination of candidates for the forthcoming Majles, the daily observed.

TEHRAN TIMES added that there was nothing wrong in trying to enter the Majles and the intensification of election campaign is always welcomed as it can open more choices for the people.

"If the defectors introduce a new list of candidates, it will give more incentives to people to participate in the elections enthusiastically," TEHRAN TIMES said.

It suggested that major political groups should not cease their political activities when the Majles polls conclude, saying that future efforts should be directed at forming political parties to pave the way for greater public participation in the country's political affairs.

Pakistan

Pakistan: 'Extraordinary' Response to Indian Nuclear Plans Reported

BK2401085796 Islamabad PAKISTAN in Urdu 24 Jan 96 p 2,5

[Report by PAKISTAN special correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] Responsible Pakistani authorities have started preparations for enabling Pakistan to counter India's second nuclear test-explosion and installation of Prithvi missiles on Pakistan-India borders.

According to reliable sources high officials of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and the Foreign Ministry held detailed consultations on Tuesday. Meanwhile, Riaz Khokhar, Pakistan's High Commissioner in India, has also been summoned in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss the situation emerging from India's stockpiling of dangerous weapons and the threat of Indian aggression. Reliable sources are viewing the consultations between the PAEC and the Foreign Ministry and the calling of Pakistani High Commissioner from New Delhi as extraordinary developments.

According to these sources Pakistan's high authorities have decided to take effective measures against India's preparations for a nuclear war. These sources believe that the consultations between PAEC and Foreign ministry officials and summoning of Riaz Khokhar to Islamabad are significant in the backdrop of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's statement in Tokyo in which she declared that if India would conduct a nuclear explosion Pakistan will not refrain from doing the same.

It has also been learnt that Pakistan's High Commissioner in New Delhi, Riaz Khokhar and high officials of the PAEC will hold an important meeting with Prime Minister Bhutto today.

Pakistani Envoy Warns of 'Measures' Against Indian Missile Deployment

BK2301154896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the United Nations, Pakistan has called for categorical assurances from India that it will not carry out another nuclear test, thus jeopardizing the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the near future. Speaking at the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva today, Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram said Pakistan would take appropriate measures if nuclear-capable missiles are deployed along its borders.

Pakistan's Envoy in Paris Says France 'Only Option' for Arms Purchases

BK2401100596 Islamabad THE NATION in English 24 Jan 96 p 9

[Report by Anjum Ibrahim]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore—France is increasingly facing a spate of terrorist attacks in its major cities. The locked dust bins in all public places in Paris bear testimony to the bomb blasts in recent months which have killed many and injured several people. And the blame is ascribed to Algerian Muslim groups who have admitted responsibility for several blasts. The term used by the French is "fundamentalist" more indicative of an inclination towards violence rather than a statement of religion.

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Pakistan government is not perceived as "fundamentalist" by the French; so opined Ambassador to France, Saidullah Dehlvi. Gone are the days when the Pakistani Embassy in France was being carefully monitored by the French especially every Friday as prayers were held on the Embassy premises and, if certain news stories appearing at the time in the French Press are to be believed, known "fundamentalists" met there under the guise of saying their prayers. Ambassador Dehlvi stated that the practice of the Friday namaaz continues but insisted that it is restricted to "our people" as it ought to have been even during the time when Shahid Amin, a Ziaul Haq stalwart, was the Ambassador.

But what about the Algerians? Hasn't France repeatedly expressed concern over the fact that known Algerian offenders against the state of France suddenly surfaced in Pakistan? The Ambassador was mute on the point but other sources confirmed that the Pakistan Embassy in Paris is no longer authorised to issue any visas to Algerian nationals unless, of course, the Interior Ministry gives its approval. A similar compliant was also voiced by Afghanis: no visas to Pakistan without the approval of the Interior Ministry.

"France is the only option left for Pakistan as far as purchasing military equipment is concerned," so opined Ambassador Dehlvi. America is out of the question because of the Pressler Amendment. Sweden too is not a viable source as its law stipulates that during a war it can not supply equipment to any of the warring sides, a clause which would make it impossible to get spares during war time when they are needed the most. Besides, so stated the Ambassador, "France has electronically the most advanced equipment in the world. And therefore the most expensive."

The process of procuring military hardware is a simple one, said Ambassador Dehlvi. "First Pakistan had to express an interest in the purchase. Second France had to take a political decision i.e. to supply it or not If the decision is favourable then the state authorises the manufacturer, Dassault in this case, to enter into negotiations with the buyer. The specifications have to be given by the buyer because apart from the fuselage everything else is according to the specifications of the buyers. Currently we are at this stage. Then will come the stage of how to pay for it. This will, of course, depend on credit to be extended by the French government."

"France has emerged as the sixth largest trading partner of Pakistan and our imports from France have declined significantly to give us a trade surplus," proudly stated the Commercial Councillor stationed at our embassy in Paris. The import of civil aircrafts has declined by 98 per cent, a fact which clearly reveals that Pakistan will have to export a lot of its primary commodities to match the value of one civil aircraft purchased from France! Thus between January and August 1994 approximately 87 million dollars were spent on civil aircraft, an amount which was dramatically reduced to 1.0 million dollars in the corresponding period in 1995 thus giving very favourable comparable figures. Carpet exports, as was to be expected, declined by 7 per cent in quantity and 13 per cent in value. Footwear, sports goods, leather goods, iron and steel optical photographic equipment all suffered from a decline in exports. Rice, hides and skins, and molasses registered an increase in Pakistani exports to France.

In spite of the ending of the yellow cab scheme between January and August 1995 vehicle and parts imports from France rose by 56 per cent. Perhaps it was the decision of the present government to allow bureaucrats to purchase the cabs as personal cars.

Ambassador Dehlvi is one of two people in the Embassy who actually speak French. The Press Councillor who must find his work greatly inhibiting because of his inability to speak the language stated that the government must give language training courses to all officers. "The publicity material is normally of low quality and only in English," he lamented further. "On top of that they (Pakistan Foreign Office one presumes) sends us cyclostyled copies of Press releases. How can we do our job effectively!"

Ambassador Dehlvi gives frequent talks at the University. However he feels that for the Embassy to be truly effective; the government would have to inject more money into it. "To project the image of Pakistan one needs money to organise cultural events, pay for advertisement campaigns etc," he stated. When asked how he expected the government to cough up the money given our rising budget deficit he advised that the government must close down all those embassies that are not important for Pakistan and select only those missions which are important. "I do not want the remaining Embassies to become ostentatious," he hastily added. "I just want them to do a better job." A sound idea indeed.

Pakistan: Editorial Views Tehran's Mediation of Islamabad-Kabul Talks

BK2301125096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 23 Jan 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Iran's Mediation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, Alaeddin Borujerdi, has said that Iran has agreed to mediate between Pakistan and Afghanistan at the request of both the countries. By making this request, both

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countries seem to have shifted their ground to some extent. Pakistan, for example, is on record having declared the Rabbani government as illegitimate. By expressing its willingness now to talk to Rabbani, Pakistan would confer on him some sort of a legitimacy. That legitimacy is in any case implied in the willingness of both the governments to maintain a diplomatic presence in each other's country, even though Pakistan's mission in Kabul is closed at the moment. The view in Islamabad seems to be that so long as Rabbani is in de facto control of Kabul, Pakistan has no option but to do business with him. That businesses can hardly be of trade or economic relations. It would have more to do with the Rabbani government's ties with India, that are a cause for concern here, as well as Iran's support for Rabbani, which has resulted in some strain in Pakistan-Iran relations. The Rabbani government's willingness to mend fences with Pakistan also implies that its two major complaints against Pakistan — that of Zia regime's support to Rabbani's rival Hekmatyar and the present regime's support for the Taleban — can be set aside for the time being to strive for more pressing gains. One would be to get some trade routes opened so that food, medicines and petroleum products can reach Kabul, and another would be to get some respectability in the international community, which saw the attack on Pakistan's Embassy as a major breach of diplomatic conduct.

In asking Iran to mediate with Rabbani, the type of concessions to Kabul that Pakistan would be willing to make, is not yet clear. But it is difficult to imagine that Pakistan would forego its claim on Kabul for proper compensation and an apology pertaining to the Afghan attack on our Embassy. The only concession it can conceivably make would probably be an assurance to distance itself from the Taleban. It would be extremely difficult for Pakistan to accord de jure recognition to Rabbani, not only because he does not have any legal cover for his rule but also because that would alienate all the other powerful factions controlling more than three-fourths of Afghanistan. So far as the Rabbani regime is concerned, it is in no position to offer any concession to Pakistan, except for a promise to improve its behaviour as a neighbour. While it would be in Pakistan's interest to accept such an offer, it for nothing else but to remove any misunderstanding with Iran, it would neither solve Rabbani's problems nor Iran's. Iran's efforts to restrain the Taleban and to mollify General Dostam have already failed. Rabbani may be able to hang on to Kabul for a while but there is no way he can conquer, the whole of Afghanistan and establish a stable government.

While we welcome Iran's initiative for a patch-up between Islamabad and Kabul, Iran should use its influence with Rabbani to make him see the realities on the ground and persuade him to accept a formula through which he can hand over power to a common council of all the Afghan leader.

Pakistan's Wali Khan Urges End to 'Interference' in Afghanistan

LD2301194196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khan Abdul Wali Khan, leader of Pakistan's Awami National Party, has called for an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. At a news conference, he said that Pakistan has been interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. According to Wali Khan, the issue of Afghanistan can only be resolved by the Afghans themselves.

Wali Khan has strongly condemned Pakistan's open interference in Afghanistan's affairs once before, asking Pakistan's rulers to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The North-West Frontiers' Pashtunkhwa [Pashtun areas in Pakistan] tribal leaders have also strongly condemned open interference in the sanctity of Afghanistan by Pakistan's regime, saying that violations and interventions in Afghan affairs by Pakistan's rulers have badly affected relations between the two countries.

Bhutto Claims Nawaz Patronizing 'Terrorism' in Karachi

BK2401094596 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 24 Jan 96 p 1

[PPI report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Tuesday accused the Opposition leader, Nawaz Sharif, of patronizing terrorism in Karachi.

"It is highly unfortunate that the PML (N) [Pakistan Muslim League—Nawaz] leader instead of condemning, encourages acts of terrorism in Karachi," Bhutto told a parliamentary party meeting of the PDF [Pakistan Democratic Front] MNAs [Member of National Assembly] here.

She questioned Nawaz's silence over the killings of policemen and personnel of law enforcement agencies saying the PML chief had never condemned brutal slaying of policemen by terrorists in Karachi. Around 200 policemen have been killed in Karachi by terrorists but Nawaz never expressed sympathy with the bereaved families, Bhutto regretted.

The prime minister resented the opposition's decision, of requisitioning the National Assembly session only to

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discuss an alleged attack on Nawaz at Hala, Sindh. "It is regrettable that the PML leader has never requisitioned the assembly session to discuss the killings of innocent people, police and army officers".

Bhutto said it had been the PML leadership's wishful thinking that it would win the Sanghar by-election. The PML expected division of PPP [Pakistan People's Party] votes because of Murtaza Bhutto's candidate and Pir Pagara's support.

Zaffarullah Khan adds: Bhutto at the PDF meeting said: "Long live Nawaz Sharif, because he suits us"

Bhutto said "many of the opposition MPs approach us with a request to disqualify Nawaz and facilita.e their elevation to the status of leader of the opposition, but we won't do that though we have irrefutable proofs against him, simply because he suits us".

She said friends were deserting Nawaz as he was not capable of launching a movement against the government even in his home town, Lahore.

Several MPs in the meeting inquired Bhutto of "air-pocket crisis" which her plane confronted en route to Japan. She was shocked that the press reported what had never happened. Hamid Nasir Chattha, sitting next to Bhutto, also endorsed it.

About Sanghar by-election, she claimed the PPP was still popular with the electorates. "Only in Rawalpindi we had difficult times, but now we are overcoming our flaws here as well".

She also rebuked the opposition leader's claim that he was on popularity ride in Sindh, Bhutto's home Province. "Had Muhajir Qaumi Movement not boy-cotted the 1993 election, the PML would have never managed five seats in Sindh", she told the meeting.

Later, PPP parliamentary party secretary Izhar Amrohvi briefed the press. He quoted the prime minister about what actually happened during Sanghar election. "In fact when leader of the Opposition's procession was passing, a few zealots raised slogans of "Jeeay Bhutto" (long live Bhutto). The PML people attacked the zealots who in their defense pelted stones which might have reached any leader's car.

"The PPP never believed in the culture of violence", said Bhutto and asked her comrades to advocate the same philosophy.

Regarding reports of extra-judicial killings in Karachi she said facts contradicted the claims. "Those who are terming police encounters as extra-judicial killings must condemn the brutal murder of about 200 security people, including army jawans, rangers and policemen, whose sole crime was countering terrorism", she stressed.

Official Pakistan Role in Attack on Opposition Leader Denied

BK2301154096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for law and justice, Mr. Raza Rabbani, told the National Assembly today that the government was in no way involved in an alleged attack on the motorcade of the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, in Hala. He was responding to allegations leveled by members and signatories from the opposition benches who have requisitioned the 22d session of the National Assembly to debate the alleged attack on Mr. Nawaz Sharif's procession in Hala. Mr. Raza Rabbani said during the campaigning for by-election in Sanghar, leader of the opposition, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, freely moved in that constituency. He held public meetings and opened an office of his party and there were no acts of violence during his visit to the area. Mr. Raza Rabbani said as a matter of fact when Mr. Nawaz Sharif was returning from Hala, his own guards opened fire on bystanders.

In a similar manner, the guards of Mr. Nawaz Sharif had opened fire in 1994 in Lahore when the leader of the opposition had made a call for wheel jam strike [blockade of vehicle traffic].

Mr. Raza Rabbani said in the incident of Sanghar, neither the leader of the opposition nor any other member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group registered any FIR [first information report] with the concerned police station despite the fact the local station house officer himself approached the leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Group. However, the local police has not only registered an FIR on its own but also conducted necessary investigation.

Earlier, the deputy leader of the opposition, Mr. Gauhar Ayub Khan, speaking on the adjournment motion, accused the government of engineering the attempt on the life of Mr. Nawaz Sharif.

Federal Minister for Works Makhdum Amin Fahim, speaking on the motion, said he condemns the politics of violence, but to the best of his knowledge there was no attack on the motorcade of Mr. Nawaz Sharif. He said, however, he being a politician from Hala, would officially and personally hold investigation into the matter.

Others who spoke on the motion include Khwaja Asif, Chaudhary Nissar Ali, Nawabzada Wazan Sargul, and Mr. Zafarullah Khan Jamali. Speaker of the National Assembly, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, after admitting the motion, allowed discussion on the issue for two hours today.

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Earlier, the house offered fateha [prayers] for the deceased mother of [National Assembly member] Mr. Ejazul Huq. The house was adjourned to meet again tomorrow morning.

Prime Minister Bhutto Dismisses 'Failed' Opposition Policies

BK2301145596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, has said the agitational politics of the opposition had failed in the past and it will fail in future as well. She was speaking at a meeting of the parliamentary party of the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] and its allied groups in Islamabad today. The prime minister said the opposition cannot launch an agitation against the government as its leader has lost support of the people.

The spokesman for the parliamentary party of the PPP, Mr. Izhar Amrohi, later briefing newsmen, said the prime minister also informed the lawmakers about the by-election in Sanghar that was won by the PPP candidate. She said the opposition was mistaken to assume that the PPP candidate would split the party vote bank in Sanghar as the followers of Pir Pagara would also not vote for the PPP nominee. She said contrary to all expectations of the opposition, the PPP vote bank remained intact and voters of PML [Pakistan Muslim League] functional [as heard] also voted for the PPP candidate. The prime minister also told the parliamentarians that the Urdu speaking people, who have grown weary of the politics based on terrorism, also voted for the PPP candidate.

Referring to the alleged attempt on the life of the opposition leader in Sanghar, the prime minister said the guards of Mr. Nawaz Sharif fired with a Kalashnikov on the people. The PPP never believed in politics of terrorism. The prime minister said that (?they have) wished Mr. Nawaz Sharif a long life who had lost confidence of a number of opposition members. [sentence as heard]

She said the opposition have requisitioned the National Assembly session to discuss law and order situation in Karachi, but have never regretted over the killings of security and law enforcing personnel by terrorists. She denied that terrorists were killed in fake encounters. She said barring a few encounters, most of the terrorists were arrested and huge caches of arms recovered from them. She said the people of Karachi have taken a sigh of relief on the arrests and deaths of criminals and terrorists. There is no protest from the people on the actions of law enforcing agencies, she added.

Sri Lanka

LTTE Rejects Government's Devolution Proposals

BK2401120996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 24 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], while admitting that the international community including the media welcomes the government's devolution proposals, has rejected them. Political analysts told LANKAPUVATH that the Tigers have rejected the government's devolution proposals for no valid reasons. In a statement issued to its bases from its political headquarters in Jaffna on the 18th, the LTTE clearly shows that it is interested in war and not peace.

Meanwhile, the politburo of the main Tamil democratic party, the TULF [Tamil United Liberation Front], which met in Colombo on Monday has also called for fuller and serious consideration of the government's devolution proposals. According to political analysts, this means that the party implicitly approved in principle the government's legal draft on the devolution proposals to be placed before the Parliamentary Select Committee.

The LTTE has been classified and Hong Kong triads and tongs and the mafia due to its involvement in extortion and narcotics smuggling. [sentence as heard] A top Canadian research institute has warned the Western countries about an upsurge in criminal activities by the Tiger activists operating on their soils in the aftermath of successful military offensives in Sri Lanka. In a paper presented to the Canadian Government and its agencies, the research institute has said that over the past 20 years the LTTE had graphically demonstrated that there was no limit to its brutality or ruthlessness. The Tigers political spokesmen are found in every refugee committee. Their extortion rackets and drug trafficking, and forgeries are international in scope. The report which described the LTTE as one of the world's most feared terrorist organizations has identified four key areas of illegal fund raising activities. They are extortion of local and expatriate Tamil community, drug trafficking, asylum seeking, and forgery of currency, passports, and credit cards. The report also adds that the LTTE and criminal activities of other Tamil insurgents began in Sri Lanka and spread to Western Europe, North America, and Australia and wherever Tamil refugees have landed. Many of the refugees have paid the Tigers colossal sums of money to gain entry to a new country.

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LTTE Reports Clashes With Government Troops in Batticaloa

BK2301142596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] intercepted and attacked Sri Lankan troops involved in the military operation in Batticaloa District at several places yesterday and the day before. These troops are backed by aerial attacks and missile barrages. An advancing Sri Lankan contingent came under severe LTTE attack at a place called Poomancholai around 0800 the day before yesterday. The contingent, consisting of soldiers from Chenkaladi and Kommanturai military camps and proceeding toward Karadian Aru locality, was the one [words indistinct] the soldiers pulled back to their original positions.

Yesterday and the day before, the LTTE attacked Sri Lankan troops that were brought to Maduru Oya and Taravaikkulam localities by Air Force helicopters. A report from Colombo says the LTTE has surrounded the soldiers in certain jungle localities.

There have been no reports of losses on the Sri Lankan side in the ongoing military operation over the past four days. Its main objective is said to be bringing the LTTE to its knees. It should be noted that the LTTE side has so far suffered no losses in the ongoing clashes.

As a result of the military operation carried out by Sri Lankan troops in Batticaloa, people are leaving their localities and moving to safer places. Five Tamil civilians have been killed in the military operation, codenamed "Sun Rays." Three people from a single family were grievously injured in missile attacks launched by the Army. Sri Lankan troops have taken away public transportation buses for the military operation now underway in Batticaloa. This has hampered the long distance services of the Sri Lanka Transport Corporation.

A Sri Lankan policeman who was attempting to molest Tamil women was shot to death by the LTTE some 100 meters from the Puttiruppu Bridge in Batticaloa. The LTTE cadres, who rushed to the spot following a tip from the people about the molestation attempt by the policeman, shot him to death and took away his weapons.

Reports say there was a major clash between the LTTE and Sri Lankan troops near Mullaitivu military camp early yesterday morning. There have been no reports of any losses in the clash, which took place at about 0230. Reports say that after this confrontation, the troops resorted to continuous shelling from their camps.

High-handed behavior by Sri Lankan troops at the Vavuniya and Tandikkulam checkposts is on the increase. Tamils traveling toward Colombo are facing too much harassment. A large number of people are returning to the north after abandoning the trip to Colombo as a result of the increasing incidents of military high-handedness.

The thirst of the Tigers is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

UNHCR Suspends Relief Operations in Sri Lanka

BK2301132096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UNHCR has suspended the provision of assistance to displaced persons in the Northern Province. The spokesman told SLBC that the reason for the suspension was obstacles placed by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to their relief work. The distribution of assistance to displaced persons in the Kilinochchi, Mullaittivu, and Vavuniya area came to a standstill yesterday following the decision by the UNHCR. The voluntary workers, who face a dangerous situation due to the LTTE activities, have refused to carry out the relief work. The UNHCR resident representative, Peter Major, told the SLBC that in addition to these problems it has become difficult for officers in these regions to maintain communications.

Meanwhile, the chairman of the Northeast Task Force, Minister Nimal S. de Silva, said that the amount of relief aid sent to displaced persons have been doubled since Sunday. However, as the transport of the aid from Vavuniya to regions where displaced persons are in camps have been disrupted, the goods have been stored at the Vavuniya AGA's [assistant government agent] office and other buildings. He added that the supply of the relief aid will be resumed when the situation improves.

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